



# THE SUFI MESSAGE OF HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

---

VOLUME 3

EDUCATION

RASA SHASTRA

CHARACTER-BUILDING AND THE ART OF  
PERSONALITY

MORAL CULTURE

---

Published for  
International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, Geneva  
by Barrie and Rockliff  
London



FIRST PUBLISHED BY BARRIE AND ROCKLIFF (BARRIE BOOKS LTD.)  
1960. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED © 1960 BY INTERNATIONAL HEAD-  
QUARTERS SUFI MOVEMENT, GENEVA. PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
THE CAMELOT PRESS LTD., LONDON AND SOUTHAMPTON

✓  
297.4  
925  
128763. v.3

SALEMAN  
V1000000000  
V1000000000

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface.	vii
EDUCATION	9
RASA SHASTRA	115
CHARACTER-BUILDING AND THE ART OF PERSONALITY	197
MORAL CULTURE	229





## PREFACE

AMONG the many-sided teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, the discussion of the problems related to our everyday life occupy an important place. Esotericism, spirituality, and religious practice counted very little for him in a person who did not fulfil his duty towards his fellowmen and himself. According to Inayat Khan a person's main task and purpose in life is to become human, in the fullest sense of the word; this is why man has come on earth and only after having achieved this will it be possible for him to return with full consciousness to the source when he had come.

In this third volume of *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan* a considerable part of the mystic's lectures and lessons on what might be called 'social' subjects have been collected. Thus one will find *Education*, a series of lectures given in the years 1925 and 1926, wherein the upbringing of the child is analysed from its infancy onwards. At the end of this book, which was first published in 1934, two very interesting earlier papers have been inserted, *The Education of Children* and *The Training of Youth*. These have never before been published in English; only a French translation was published in 1922. While *Education* follows the development of the child and the care it should receive at different ages from its guardians in great detail, the two latter papers give a broader outline of the fundamental spiritual principles which should govern the educator.

*Rasa Shastra*, the science of life's creative forces, contains a series of lessons Inayat Khan gave to his pupils on sexual relationship. It was first published in 1938. *Character-Building and the Art of Personality* and *Moral Culture*, both consisting of lessons given at different times during the years following the First World War, were published respectively in 1931 and 1937.



## EDUCATION





## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. The Education of the Infant	13
II. The Education of the Baby	34
III. The Education of the Child	53
IV. The Education of Youth	75
The Education of Children	87
The Training of Youth	103





## CHAPTER I

# THE EDUCATION OF THE INFANT

### i

IT IS never too soon in the life of a child for it to receive education. The soul of an infant is like a photographic plate which has never been exposed before, and whatever impression falls on that photographic plate covers it; no other impressions which come afterwards have the same effect. Therefore when the parents or guardians lose the opportunity of impressing an infant in its early childhood they lose the greatest opportunity.

In the Orient there is a superstition that an undesirable person must not be allowed to come near an infant. If the parents or relatives see that a certain person should not be in the presence of an infant, that person is avoided, for the very reason that the infant is like a photographic plate. The soul is negative, fully responsive, and susceptible to every influence; and the first impression that falls on a soul takes root in it.

In the first place an infant brings with it to the earth the spirit with which it is impressed from the angelic spheres and from the plane of the jinn; it has also inherited from the earth qualities of both its parents and of their families. After coming on earth the first impression that an infant receives is from the environment, the surroundings, from those who touch it and move and work in its surroundings; and the impression after coming to the earth is so strong that very often it erases the impressions that an infant has inherited from the higher spheres, and also the heritage from its parents. This happens because the mind that has been formed of the impressions which the infant has brought from the higher spheres is not yet positive. It is just like a pot of clay which has not yet gone through the fire; it has not yet developed.

The qualities that an infant has inherited from its parents are also in the same negative state; and they are perfected after the child has come on earth. Therefore the first impression that falls

upon an infant after coming on earth is all the stronger. The first process in making pottery is to mould pots of clay, and the second process is to put them in the fire. When they are put in the fire they become strong, they become positive; before they are put in the fire they are negative.

In the same way a photographic plate is first negative; afterwards, when it has undergone a certain process, it becomes positive. And that is the process through which the soul passes in its infancy; it then goes through a certain development. All that it has brought from the higher spheres and from its family becomes developed, becomes positive or solid, in other words it becomes condensed; because that is the time when the spirit is being formed and is becoming positive. If an undesirable impression has fallen upon an infant at that time, no matter what education is given later that first impression remains concrete and solid. Nothing can erase it because infancy is the moment when the soul is becoming positive.

In educating the child the first rule that must be remembered is that one person must educate it, not everybody in the family. It is a great mistake when everyone in the family tries to train the infant or to take care of it, because that keeps an infant from forming a character. Each one has his own influence and each influence is different from the other. But most often what happens is that the parents never think of education at all in infancy. They think that is the age when the child is a doll, a toy; that everyone can handle it and play with it. They do not think that it is the most important moment in the soul's life; that never again will that opportunity come for a soul to develop.

Should the father or the mother educate the child? A man's life demands all his attention in his work; the mother is born with the sense of duty towards her child, and therefore the mother has the first right to educate it. The mother can also quiet the child in the first days of its life, because the child is a part of the mother, and therefore the rhythm of the mother's spirit is akin to the rhythm of the child's spirit. The soul that has come from above is received and is reared and taken care of by the mother; and therefore the mother is its best friend. If there is anything that the father can do, it is to help the mother or the guardian to



educate the child. If the child in its infancy were given entirely into the hand of the father, there would be little hope that it would come out right; because a man is a child all his life, and the help that is needed in the life of an infant is that of the mother. Nevertheless, later in the life of a child there comes a time when the father's influence is equally needed; but that time is not in infancy. As the Brahmin says, the first Guru is the mother, the second Guru is the father, and the third Guru is the teacher.

That one person who takes an infant in hand in order to train it must first establish a friendship with it. There was in India a Madzub, a sage, who used to live among elephants. He used to share his bread with them and sleep near them. At the same time there were those who were appointed to take care of the elephants. They controlled them with their spears and with their commands. Very often the elephants listened to them; but when an elephant was mad it would not listen, and often a keeper was killed at such times. The elephant would not recognize the keeper when it was mad. But this sage had a friendship with all the elephants, with the mad and the sober and with every one of them. He used to go near them and pat them and look at them and talk with them, and he would sleep near them unconcerned; yet they would never touch him.

What does this show? It shows that there are two ways of controlling. One is the way of mastering, and the other is of becoming friends. By mastering you will diminish the will of the person you master; by being friends you will sustain his will-power, and at the same time help. In the one case you make of the person a slave; in the other case you make out of that person a king. In training an infant one must remember that his mind-power, which means will-power, must not be diminished, and yet an infant must be controlled.

There are five different subjects in which an infant must be trained in the first year: discipline, balance, concentration, ethics, and relaxation.

When once friendship is established with an infant the guardian is able to attract its attention and the infant will respond to the guardian. And that must be the necessary first condition; that condition must first be produced before beginning education.



When once an infant begins to respond fully to the guardian, then discipline can be taught; but not by anger, not by agitation, as the guardian very often does; for an infant is often very trying, and is sometimes more stubborn than any grown-up person can be, and most difficult to control.

The best way of teaching the infant discipline is without agitation, without showing any temper or annoyance, only repeating the action before it. For instance, the infant wants something which it should not have, while the guardian wishes that it should play with a particular toy. This toy must be given continually into its hand; and when the child throws it away, or when it cries, give it again; and when the child does not look at it, give it again. By repeating the same action you will bring the infant automatically to respond to you and to obey. It is a wrong method when the guardian wishes to control an infant and wishes to teach it discipline by forcing a certain action upon it. It is repetition which will bring about discipline. It only requires patience. For instance, if the infant is crying for its food or for something else when it is not the time for it, one should attract its attention towards something else, even against its wishes. The best thing is repetition.

Balance can be taught to an infant by bringing its rhythm at the moment when it is excited by a certain action, to a normal condition. For instance, when an infant is very excited, then the rhythm of its action and movement is not normal. By clapping the hands, or by rattling, or by knocking on something one can make the rhythm of the infant change to one's own rhythm; because any noise will attract an infant, and a noise made in a certain rhythm will influence its rhythm according to it. However excited the infant may be, begin by making some noise in its rhythm, and then bring it to a normal rhythm. For instance, if a rattle or something similar is first moved with the infant's rhythm, and then moved gradually in a slower rhythm, the infant will come naturally to that rhythm. The excitement will abate; the whole condition of the infant's mind, the blood circulation, the movements, the expression, everything will change to a normal rhythm.

There are three rhythms. There is a rhythm of passiveness,

where the child is not active at all. That means the child is not well or there is something wrong with it, something that should not be. There is a second rhythm where the child is active but not excited; that is the normal rhythm. And there is a third rhythm where the child is excited. That excitement must be brought to the second rhythm, where the child was active but not excited. This can be brought about by giving a child what it likes. If it does not like one toy, give another toy; and if not that toy, another toy, and yet another toy. In this way do everything to occupy its mind, so that for some moments it will keep to one thing.

The excitement of an infant is the changing of the rhythm; for the infant has no control over its own rhythm. It goes on at a greater and greater speed, until it cries or laughs. And the laughter or the cry is just the same. On the one side the infant will laugh and on the other side cry, because its rhythm is not normal. It can only be brought to a normal condition by the guardian's effort. But if one gets agitated or does not like the infant or is displeased with it, then one cannot help it.

Should one stop an infant from crying? It is better to distract the mind of a child that is crying than to let it cry, but at the same time it is very natural for a child to cry sometimes. If the child does not cry, it means that there is something lacking in it, that the child is not normal. One must use discretion in how much one allows the child to cry and when to stop it. One can allow it to go as far as a certain rhythm; when it has reached that rhythm, then it must not cry any longer; that is the time to stop it. But when a mother, annoyed with the infant, stops its crying the moment it begins, it has a bad effect on its nervous system. And very often a guardian will put the child into the cradle or somewhere else to cry by itself. But that means leaving it in the same rhythm, and that does not help. In that way the child will become worse and worse, and more and more nervous every day.

And now regarding the concentration of an infant. Toys with different colours, fruits, flowers, things that attract an infant should be brought before it, whatever attracts most; and then one must try and attract its attention to that particular object, let it play with it, let it look at it, be interested in it. In this way the guardian can develop in the child the faculty of concentration,



which will be of the greatest importance when it is grown-up. If this quality is not developed, it will be very difficult for the child to concentrate when it grows up. Besides that, one brings a great interest into the life of the child when it begins to concentrate. And the child concentrates without knowing it. Give it any beautiful thing it likes to amuse itself with, and if its fancy is taken by it, if it is absorbed in it, the child will concentrate naturally upon it. It is good for the child, for its soul and its body, because concentration is all the power there is.

Regarding ethics: this important word is used here, but in reality, the greatest ethics or morals that one can learn in life are friendliness, which culminates in generosity; and it is never too soon to cultivate this seed of morals in the child. When you give something to an infant which it likes, and with friendliness and sympathy and love you ask the child to give it to you, that brings about the feeling of giving and at the same time the feeling of friendliness. Very often the infant is not willing to give, but that means it is not trained to do so. You do not need to force it out of its hands, but by having patience and repeating your wish that the object may be given you, in the end the infant will give it. It may be that the first three or four times, if the child is very tenacious by nature, it will refuse, but in the end it will give it to you; and in this way it is taught the essence of morals.

Should one teach an infant that there are certain things it owns and other things which do not belong to it? Whatever an infant sees, whoever it belongs to, the infant owns it, and owns it as its birthright. It has not yet awakened to this world of limitations, of divisions. All that is there belongs to it; it really belongs to the infant. It is our consciousness of duality that makes us poor. The infant is rich, richer than anyone in this whole world. The infant has the riches of God; because, as everything belongs to God, so, too, everything belongs to an infant. And therefore there is no desire on the part of an infant to own anything: the infant owns all things. It is experience of the world that gives the child, as it grows, the desire to own, because then it becomes limited; then there are things which belong to others and certain things which belong to the child, and this means limitation.

Sometimes people think, 'Is it not wrong in a way to make a



person generous in this wicked world, where everyone wishes to snatch away everything from everybody he sees? And especially all the simple people who are giving, who are generous, they are the ones who do not take, but others do.' The answer is that a selfish person is his own enemy. He thinks that selfishness is profitable, but his own action works against him. It might seemingly give him success. By selfishness he might earn riches or by a tenacious quality hold on to position, rank or something else; but at the same time he is defeating his own object, he is making himself weak. Besides in the end, whatever be one's experience, one will come to the realization that from those who pursue the world, the world runs away, and those who turn their backs on the world, the world follows. The spirit of all morals and ethics is friendliness, learning to sacrifice and learning to serve; and that last lesson can be given first to an infant.

Finally we come to relaxation. The infant can become very troublesome to the guardian and to others if it has not learned relaxation properly. But relaxation is learned by an infant much sooner than by a grown-up person. One only needs to put the infant in an even rhythm, to give it calm and quiet surroundings, to place it in a comfortable position, to make passes over the child to give its nervous system rest, looking into its eyes with sympathy and with the thought of its going to sleep, producing by one's own thought and feeling and atmosphere a restful and peaceful atmosphere for an infant so that it can experience relaxation.

It is very necessary for these five different subjects to be taught in infancy. Besides that, regularity should be observed in everything concerning an infant. In its food, in its sleep, in everything there must be regularity, because nature is rhythmic. The four seasons come regularly; the rising and the setting of the sun, and the waxing and the waning of the moon, all show that nature is rhythmic. By observing the rules of regularity with an infant one can build a foundation for a soul to grow up most successfully.

## ii

While the infant is being nursed by its own mother the heart quality is being formed in it; and it is upon that quality that the

feeling of the infant depends for its whole life. Not understanding this, people today have other methods of feeding an infant; and by these that spirit of heritage and many merits and qualities that the child has to develop, become blunted. Mechanical food is prepared, and the child's heart becomes mechanical when it grows up. Once a Moghul emperor was very much astonished when he saw his son shaken by the noise of a gun, and he said to his minister, 'I cannot understand how a child of my family could show such a trait.' The wise minister said, 'If you will enquire how the child was brought up, you will find that it was not nursed by its mother.'

Just as the flesh of different animals is affected by each particular animal's character, so with everything one eats one partakes of its spirit. An infant is destined to receive qualities from its mother, in the form of food; and it is these qualities which become a fertilizer for the development of its heart. Food, made from the juice of fruits or meat and stored in bottles or tins, when given to an infant at an early age, forms undesirable atoms, and causes the infant to grow denser every day. If the mother is unable to nurse the infant herself, the best way is to find a nurse. And that nurse must be considered not only from the health point of view, as many do, but also from the character point of view. She must be looked at from every angle.

When the infant is cutting its teeth the mind develops; that is the time of the development of the mind. By keenly watching an infant grow, one will find that the day when it begins to cut its teeth the expression of its eyes changes; a mind is born, a thought is created. It is from that time that it begins to take notice of things and begins to think. The coming of the teeth is only an outward manifestation; the inner process is that the mind is forming. It is therefore a most important time in the life of an infant. For what is mind? Mind is the world. The infant at that time is forming the world in which it will live.

The moment when an infant begins to stand up and walk is the moment when power is beginning to become manifest in it. Enthusiasm, courage, the power of enduring, the power of patience, the power of perseverance, all these come at that time; it is the time when power is bestowed upon an infant. And the



moment when the infant begins to speak is the time that its spirit has formed, that the mind is connected with the soul and connected with the body; the whole spirit is made at that moment.

From that moment the child should be considered as an individual. It is a little individual which then begins to have in itself the essence of everything and all things in the world; for in every soul there is a spark of every object and every quality that exists in the whole universe. And so, at this time when the spirit is completed, the essence of all the different qualities and merits and objects that exist in the world has formed as a spark in the infant.

The best way, therefore, for a mother to educate an infant is to educate herself. The calmness, the quietness, the tenderness, the gentleness, everything the mother cultivates in her nature at that particular time when the infant is nursed, the infant will receive as a lesson in its cradle. The heart qualities are the most profound qualities man has; brain qualities come afterwards; and it is the heart qualities which make the basis of the whole life. At that particular time such qualities as kindness, sympathy, affection, tenderness, gentleness, mildness develop, and it is at that time also that regularity is taught to the child, when the child learns its first lesson in being punctual. Unconsciously, it learns a rhythm. It knows the time when it should be fed. It does not need a watch to look at; it knows its time of resting, it knows its time of feeding. And by introducing rhythm into the mind of the child you put it on the road to perfection.

Mothers who get annoyed with an infant, who put it aside and say, 'Well, let him cry for a time', considering other work more important, do not know what they are missing. Handling the child is the greatest opportunity. And even if they do it at the greatest sacrifice it is worth while; because once an infant is impressed with being neglected by the mother, there remains all its life an impression, in the deepest depth of its being, of a soreness; and when a person grows up he feels it unconsciously, and then he is displeased and dissatisfied with everybody he meets. When one lets an infant be fed at any time and be put to sleep at any time, that keeps it from a proper, even rhythm, and hinders its progress in life. For infancy is the first step on the path of progress.



When the mind of an infant is being formed, when it is cutting its teeth, people sometimes give it a rattle or something of rubber or wood, to put in its mouth. From a psychological point of view this is most undesirable, because it does not answer the purpose of the mouth. The mouth is for eating. Physically it is not good for its nerves and its gums, and psychologically it accomplishes no purpose. In the same way anything that is given to an infant at that age which does not serve a particular purpose, is a wrong thing to give. A child must not be deceived, even from his childhood, by an object which has no purpose. Even from infancy every object that is given to the child must inspire him with its use. An object that has no use, that serves no purpose, hinders the progress of an infant.

The moment when the infant stands up and walks is a moment which should be guarded with the greatest interest and keenness. This is the moment when the powers are being manifested; and if these powers are used and directed towards something, a box or a tray, or something which is not inspiring, which does not give back something to the child, those powers are being blunted at every effort the child makes to go towards it. Then the best thing is to call the child towards oneself, to gain the child's sympathy and attention. This attracts the child and gives new life.

Nothing one does with an infant should be purposeless. If it is so, then its whole life will be purposeless. There are many who after they are grown-up cannot accomplish a certain purpose in their life. Very often the reason is that from their childhood, when the forces were rising, they were not directed to a purpose. It does not matter if a sweet were put there, or a fruit or a flower; if the child was directed to bring that, then there is a purpose. But when the child is directed to go to a box, or to the wall or door, where it has no gain, then the effort which has risen unconsciously is lost.

The beginning of a person's life is of greater importance than the latter part, because it is in childhood that the road is made for him to go forward in life. And who makes the road? It is the guardian of the child who makes the road for it. If that road is not made and the guardian is asleep, then the child has great difficulty when it is grown-up. School education and college

education will come afterwards; but the education of the greatest importance in the life of a soul comes in its infancy.

Now there is a symbolism in the actions of a child. If the child goes straight towards something, that shows the straightness of his nature. If the child is wobbly, then it shows lack of will-power. If the child goes to one side and stands there, and then goes to another side and another, and then walks back, this shows that there is a fear, a doubt, and that the mind is not clear. If its mind were clear, the child would go straight. If it stops on the way, then this itself is a hindrance in its future life.

If the child runs and reaches a certain place, it is impulsive and venturesome; it will jump into something when it is grown-up. But if an infant as soon as it begins to walk adopts a proper rhythm and reaches a desired spot, that infant is very promising. It shows singleness of purpose and balance by the rhythm of its walk. An infant which is beginning to walk, and which does not look at the guardian, but is only interested in what it sees before it, will be indifferent when it is grown-up; but an infant who after going to a place is attracted again to the guardian shows the heart quality. He will be a loving soul.

Should one do gymnastics with an infant? No, an infant is too young for gymnastics. But every action that can be taught in order to bring about a rhythm and balance and discipline, and concentration and affectionate feeling, works towards building its future; and thus the first education is the foundation of its character.

By saying that one person and not several should train an infant, one does not mean that the infant should be kept away from everyone. No doubt others can entertain the infant for a moment; they can see it, they can admire, they can love it; but only for a short time. If four or five persons are handling it at the same time, then the child's character will not be decided; it will neither be one thing nor the other. If the same guardian watches over the child all the time this will always be beneficial whether the infant is with others or not.

When an infant reaches the age of two or three years, it is most beneficial if it is taught a moment of silence. But one might say, 'How can a silence be taught?' A silence can be taught by



attracting an infant's attention very keenly, and this can be done by rhythm. When you make a certain noise by clapping your hands or by making a rhythm, and when you attract the attention of an infant fully, then if you wish it to be inactive, you can hold it in an inactive condition for a moment; and that can do a great deal of good. It could become a kind of religious or esoteric education from infancy. If an infant can keep his eyes from blinking, and his breath and the movement of his hands and legs suspended for one moment, it accomplishes even at that age a meditation.

Furthermore, when the infant is beginning to utter sounds, such as *ba*, *pa*, *ma*, *boo*, *goo*, one should not take it as something unimportant or something which has no meaning; one must realize that each such sound is a new lesson that an infant has learnt from the world, and one should give that word great importance, because it is the first word and that is a divine word. The best way of training an infant to learn the meaning of these words and sounds is to repeat with it the same sounds, to let the child hear the same word over and over again, and become interested in what it is saying; and then to attract its attention to objects and persons of that name. It is in this way that the words *ma* and *pa* have come into being. It is not that someone else has given these names; the infant has given them to its father and mother. Others have added to those words and made them *mater*, *mader*, *mother*, but it began with *ma* and *pa*. It is a natural word, it has come from the depth of the mind of the infant; it is a divine word. Its origin is a divine origin.

Such a word as 'mummy' is the third word, and is brought about with the help of the guardian. The first word is *ma*, the second word is *mama*, and the third word is *mummy*; *mama* is extended to *mummy*. As fashions come in dress, so there come fancies in words. People like to use a certain word for some time and then it becomes a fashion.

One can help an infant by repeating different words with it and by pointing out to it the meaning of the words, instead of always urging upon it another word to be repeated. One spoils the ear of an infant in that way. The Nawab of Rampur once expressed a desire to the chief musician of his court to learn music himself, and the master said, 'I will teach you music on one



condition, and that is that you do not listen to every kind of music that comes your way. When bad music is heard the ear becomes spoiled; and then you cannot discriminate between bad music and good music.'

So it is with an infant. The infant is saying *pa*, and the mother is saying *leaf*. The infant is saying something, and the guardian is saying something else. There is no harmony and no purpose is accomplished. The infant is unable to say *leaf*; it is beginning to say *pa*. Its own intuition has guided it, and it is better to go with nature and to let an infant be enlightened by every sound it makes, by showing it something connected with that sound. It is in this way that an infant is helped to speak. Then, if it learns to speak by nature's method, it promises one day to speak from intuition.

It is the will that has brought the child to the earth, otherwise it would not have come. It comes by its own will and it stays by its own will. The will is like the steam that makes the engine go forward. If the child wishes to go back, that depends upon its wish. It is always by the will of the soul. And therefore in the child you see the will in the form in which it has come. But often during childhood the will is broken, and then it remains broken all through life. If in childhood the parents took good care that the will was not broken, then the will would manifest itself in wonders. The child would do wonderful things in life if its will was sustained, if it was cherished.

### iii

The infant that is born on earth brings with it the air of heaven. In its expression, in its smiles, even in its cry you hear the melody of the heavens. The Sufi point of view is that an infant is an exile from heaven, and that is why its first expression on earth is a cry. The soul that comes from above feels uncomfortable on the dense earth. This atmosphere is strange and not free; and it is a feeling of exile that makes the soul cry, a feeling of horror, of a terror of this world of woes.

When a child comes to the earth without a cry it indicates abnormality. The child is quite abnormal, and it will not have

a full development, because the new sphere has not struck it; in other words, it is not fully awake to the new sphere. Bring a waking person here, he will look at what is going on; bring a drunken person, he will sit here in intoxication. He does not know what is going on, he is not aware of the conditions, he does not care. And so it is with an infant. There is hardly a case where an infant does not cry; but if there is such a case there is something wrong. Why is the soul so much attracted to the earth? It is attracted to the earth because it is bound to the earth. It is the soul's passion to manifest; it is only expressing its passion.

Before the infant came to the world it had educators too, one or many educators. It first had educators on the jinn plane, the inhabitants of that plane and the ones going back who met it on the jinn plane. The older ones on the angelic plane have their experience, their life, their feeling to impart to a new soul going further on the journey. It is from there that an infant has brought the feeling of admiration for all beauty, the feeling and love of harmony, innocence, and the depth of feelings. Then it met other teachers on the jinn plane, and these teachers are the ones to whom it was directed from the angelic plane; because according to its association on the angelic plane it takes a certain route, a certain direction. It is the first instructors in the life of an infant who have the influence which directs and determines its destiny on the jinn plane.

Can the soul choose its instructor on the angelic and jinn planes, one may ask, or is it helpless before anyone who is attracted to it? There is always free will and the lack of it on all planes. If we go into the midst of the city, there are some things that we purposely want to see; we are looking for them. At the same time there are many things which attract our attention also without any intention on our part. In the same way, when the soul arrives it is attracted to things and beings which it had no intention of being attracted to, and at the same time it has its choice; it has both.

The experiences of the infant before birth on the higher planes are not directed by the stars as we understand it from the astrological point of view; it is from the time that it comes to the earth that its connection with the stars begins. But at the same time



there are other factors which to a large extent determine the soul's destiny.

On the jinn plane the soul receives instruction from the inhabitants of that sphere, and also from those who have just returned from the earth, eager to give to the infant their experience, their knowledge, and all they still have with them brought from the earth. They would have given to it even what they had on the earthly plane, but no one is allowed to take to the other sphere what he has collected here. All that belongs to this sphere a person must leave behind in order to be free and in order to be allowed to enter the higher spheres. And therefore, what they have is what they have collected in those spheres while they were on earth. That is all they have, the thoughts, impressions, feelings, experiences, knowledge that they have gained. It is all, so to speak, a collection which a person makes in the higher spheres, but it is not something which can be deposited in the bank. So when man has left to the earth all that he has borrowed from the earth, then he goes on with only that property which he has deposited or collected in the higher spheres without knowing it. Very few on earth know that while they live on the earthly plane they are collecting something in the higher plane. They live at the same time on the higher plane, but they do not know it.

With this heritage and with this knowledge and instruction that it has received from one or many, an infant comes to the earth. People might object that an infant does not show any sign of any knowledge of the earth nor of the heavens; it does not show any sign of the angelic world nor of the world of the jinns. They do not know that an infant can perceive or can receive impressions of human beings much more readily than grown-up people. The infant at once senses the right person; and sometimes it perceives more than a grown-up person. Besides that, we grown-up people think that we appreciate music, but if we realized the sense that an infant has brought with it of appreciating sound and rhythm, we would never boast of knowing music. The infant is music itself. In the cradle it is moving its little arms and legs in a certain rhythm. And when our music falls on the ears of an infant it is of the lowest character compared with the music it is accustomed to.



At the same time it begins to move its legs and its arms to the rhythm of the dense music. We may believe we have the finest music, but for an infant it is the most dense music; it is accustomed to much finer music than we can conceive. It longs for it, it looks for it; and what we give as a substitute does not satisfy it. For a moment it tries to listen to it, it tries to enjoy, to like it; but at the same time it does not feel at home, it turns its back and wants to go away. Only for a moment it tries to enjoy it, thinking it is something that belongs to its country, which means the heavens; and then it finds out: no, it is foreign. That is the only reason why an infant will cry in the middle of a concert; if it were not so an infant would enjoy it more than anyone.

It takes some time for an infant to become accustomed to the life of the earth. And what makes it accustomed to it? Colour. Colour is what attracts most, and then sound. When it gets accustomed to the dense sound and the dense colour, then it gradually begins to lose its heavenly attributes. And when its first wish is to change from being an angel and walk like an animal, when it begins to creep, it begins its earthly life; but before that it was an angel. Infancy is angelic; it is not the jinn time, it is the angelic time.

Infancy may be divided into three parts: the first three years are real infancy. The first year the infant is most angelic; the second year there is a little shade of the jinn sphere; and the third year it begins to manifest the earthly influence, the influence of this world. So an infant becomes worldly in its third year.

Why is it that an infant, though still conscious of the angelic planes, has no feeling of kindness originally? The angels are not obliged to be kind. They are kindness itself, but that angelic kindness must awaken here. Kindness and cruelty are learned after coming here; when the infant comes, it comes with love alone. Everything else is taught here. And if the guardians knew this, they would help the child much better. There are many qualities that the soul has brought from the higher spheres, but those qualities remain undeveloped if they remain buried, if they are not given an opportunity to develop. Thus, if kindness has not been given an opportunity to develop in the child, the

kindness will remain buried in the depth of its heart all its life, and it will not know it.

Parents sometimes think that it is bad manners for an infant to put its hand in its mouth, and therefore they give it something made of wood or rubber, or something else. It very much hinders its real progress in life, because every soul is born to reach the ideal of being self-sufficient. An infant tries from the beginning to put its hand in its mouth when the mouth wants something; and the parents, in order to teach good manners, give it something else, making the infant more artificial. If they left it to its natural tendency, they would help its growth, its progress towards a higher ideal. What are the saints and sages and adepts and mystics doing during their time of spiritual attainment? They eliminate everything in their life which makes them depend on things outside. They eat with their hands; instead of taking plates they use leaves; and everything they do shows that they wish to become independent.

By independence is meant self-sufficiency: that what they can get from their own self they must not look for outside. That is the principal motive of those who are striving for self-attainment, because it is the means of overcoming the sorrows and troubles and woes of this life. One sees a constant striving in the life of the adepts to make themselves independent of outside things as much as possible. On the other hand worldly people think it progress if they can become daily more dependent on others. Every step we take is towards dependence; and the more we depend upon others, the more we think we are progressing. In the end we come to such a stage that for what the soul needs, what the mind needs, what the body needs, we depend upon others. And, not knowing this, we teach the child to put something else instead of its little hand in its mouth. In reality, it is natural for an infant to put its hand in its mouth; and that is the purest and the cleanest toy that it can have to play with.

The Qur'an says there is a time for everything. And so there is a time, there is a day, an hour, a moment fixed for the child to change its attitude: to learn to sit, to learn to stand, to learn to walk. But when the parents, eager to see the child stand or sit or walk, help it, the child will do it before the time, and that works



against its development; because it is not only that it begins to learn to sit or to stand or to walk; there is a far greater meaning in it. These are different stages which an infant goes through in its spiritual life. Physically these are just ordinary actions; spiritually it is a stage. When the child sits it is a stage; when it stands it is a stage; when it begins to walk it is a stage. These are like three first initiations in the life of an infant.

In order to understand the meaning of an infant's laughter and cry one must become an infant, because it is the language of another sphere. But when a person does not trouble about it, then its cry is only a nuisance and its laughter is a game. Sometimes people wish to make the child laugh more and more because they are interested or as an entertainment; or people neglect the child, leaving it to cry, and pay no attention; or when an infant is crying the mother says, 'Be quiet, be quiet'; in all these cases they lose the opportunity of understanding the language of an infant. This is the opportunity for the guardian, for the mother, for the one who looks after an infant, to learn the heavenly language. For there is nothing that has no meaning, and every movement of an infant, who is an expression, an example, from above, has a meaning. But as we are absorbed from morning to evening in the responsibilities and duties of the world, we forget the responsibility and duty to the infant. And because the infant cannot speak in our language and tell us how neglectful we are of what it wants, and what it needs, and what can be done for it, there remains a wall of separation between mother and child.

An infant knows and feels the presence of an undesirable person in the atmosphere around it. It is very unwise when people engage any nurse that comes along to take care of their infant. And it is unfortunate in these days when mothers have many other occupations, that they cannot take charge of their infant themselves, and have to send it to what they call a crèche, a place where they take care of infants. This does not mean that to keep an infant among many other infants is not right, but at the same time it is only after we have grown up in this dense world that we come together, if not very much, at least partially. It is always difficult for many people to work together, to be together, to



live together; and yet we have been here on this earth so many years, and we have become accustomed to the life of the earth. But what about an infant who has just arrived and who is placed among other infants, where the gap between the evolution of one infant and another is infinitely greater than the difference between two grown-up persons? They are not yet accustomed to being together, and the atmosphere of one infant is bad for another. It is all right for many soldiers to be together in one room; for many patients to be together in one hospital; but for many infants to be put in one place after being exiled from paradise to this earth, imagine what it means for them to have this experience! It is like a king banished from his kingdom. No doubt after six months or a year an infant becomes accustomed to it; but at the same time the individuality of the soul and the development of the personality become blunted.

No doubt a great amount of patience is required to take care of an infant. But patience is never wasted; patience is a process through which a soul passes and becomes precious. Souls who have risen above the world's limitations and sorrows, the world's falseness and deception, they are the souls who have passed through patience. If it is the destiny of the guardian or the mother to acquire patience, she must know that there is nothing lost, but that she has gained something in her life. To raise an infant, to look after it, to educate it, and to give oneself to its service, is as much and as good a work as the work of an adept; because an adept forgets himself by meditation, a mother forgets herself by giving her life to the child.

There is always a possibility of giving an infant bad habits. For example sometimes a guardian enjoys the laughter of an infant and thus makes it laugh more and more, because it is amusing. But however much an infant has laughed, so much it must cry afterwards, in order to make a balance. And then there may be another mother who, as soon as an infant has opened its mouth to cry, says, 'Quiet, quiet!'; but if an infant then becomes quiet, something in its character is broken. It wants to cry, it must be allowed to cry; there is something in its character that wants to come out.

There is also a tendency in an infant to throw things about, to

slap, to kick, to tear, to break things. Sometimes it is such a little thing that is broken or spoiled that the mother thinks its behaviour is enjoyable. But if an infant is allowed to do what ought not to be encouraged, it will only make it difficult for it later. It must be corrected, but at the same time it must not be corrected with anger or annoyance. It should be corrected repeatedly by giving the infant something to do which is different from what it was doing before. One should always keep an infant focused on things that will be good for it, and try to divert its attention from things that it must not do, instead of enjoying and amusing oneself with things that it does which the parents may think do not matter.

It is very difficult to stop an infant in its first year from destroying things. Besides the inclination to destroy things is a great virtue in the child. It is the desire of the soul to know the mystery of life; because every object before an infant is a cover over the mystery the soul is looking for. It is annoyed with it because it is a cover. It wants to know, by breaking it, what it is.

However, it is possible to stop the infant from breaking things, but by suggestion, not by getting annoyed. Annoyance must be avoided, because it is not good for an infant if one is annoyed with it. The more patience one has with an infant the better; it will become more powerful. But if you are annoyed, then the nervous system of the infant deteriorates, and it becomes depressed. Its nervous system becomes contracted, it becomes tired; and when it is grown-up a fear remains. One must be extremely careful with an infant that its nerves do not get cramped. Its nervous centres are delicate; and these are the centres which are intuitive centres. Later on, these centres will help the soul to perceive higher knowledge. And if these centres become cramped by the annoyance of the guardians, then the infant has lost that faculty by which it should grow and profit in life. The infant will understand; one must have patience. One should repeat, 'You must not break it', every time he breaks something. Let him break ten times, and every time just say, 'You must not break it'; that helps.

Regarding the bad nature of an infant, sometimes it shows stubbornness and obstinacy even to the extent that one feels



annoyed and begins to scold it. But that is not right. Scolding has a bad effect on the nerves of an infant. And once a bad effect has been made on the nerves of an infant there will be a mark of annoyance on the nerves all through its life. The best thing at such moments is to call the attention of the infant repeatedly to something that will take away that thought, and we must never tire of doing it. It is this which will make it come back to a proper rhythm.

There are two principal temperaments in infants: active and passive. There is an infant that is quite happy in the place where it is put, quite contented, enjoying itself; it cries only when it is hungry. And there is another infant who is always doing something; either it must cry, or break, or tear something; it must do something all the time. The best thing is to bring the infant back to a normal rhythm. An active infant must be quieted by the influence of the guardian; by attracting its mind to a certain thing, by beating time and getting it into a certain rhythm. Infancy is the time when the impulsive nature can be trained, and that is the time to draw out what is really best in the impulsive nature and utilize the impulsive nature to its best advantage.

When an infant is quiet, contented, passive, happy-natured, one must not be contented about it, because it may not prove to be good in the end. That infant should be made a little more active. A little more attention must be given to it, a few more playthings, a little more thought must be given. It should be stimulated, it should be picked up and its attention attracted to this or that, so that it may become more active and more interested in the things it sees; that will bring about a proper balance.



## CHAPTER II

### THE EDUCATION OF THE BABY

#### i

IN THE first five years of a child's life, the first two years are considered as infancy, the next three years as babyhood. Very often there is a desire on the part of the guardians to educate the child of four or five years either in a kindergarten or at home. That time in the life of a child is a time of kingship, and the eagerness on the part of the guardians for the child's education to begin is only pressing it with our competitive life. For our life is competitive and it is getting worse and worse every day; and the same spirit unconsciously exerts pressure on the life of the child, urging it on to become one among the many competitors of the world, in order to guard its interest when it is grown-up. But what about the most blessed years that destiny has granted to the baby, when there is no worry, no anxiety, no malice, and no ambition? That is the real kingship. If you compare a baby with a king, you will see that the baby is the king and the king is the imitation.

No doubt it is better that the child learns in the kindergarten, where it is taught only the alphabet, than at school, because there its mind is distracted and it has something to play with. But at the same time, even attracting the mind of the child to a limited horizon is limiting the growth of its soul. It was much better to do as the peasants and the uncivilized people used to do, keeping their children at that age perfectly free to run about and to climb the trees and play with the soil, and to jump and run about and play with their playmates. It is a great mistake on the part of the guardians to deprive the child of that freedom and happiness which the heavens have granted it in that period.

The story of Adam's exile from the Garden of Eden shows that there is a certain time in a man's life when he is in the Garden of

Eden, and after that time he is exiled from there and no longer experiences that joy and happiness and freedom that once the soul possessed. There is not one soul in this world who has not experienced the Garden of Eden, and that Garden of Eden is babyhood.

Now there comes the question of controlling children's intense activity. In the first place their intense activity is tiresome to other people in the family because their interests are different. But if its interest is different that is not a fault on the part of the child. For instance the guardian may be working or writing, or taking a rest, or thinking about something worldly, while the child is playing and making a noise; and the guardian thinks, 'No, this is wrong'. But wrong according to which law? It is a lack of consideration when the guardian is not tolerant of the activity of the baby. No doubt it does not always fit in with the earthly people. But babies are not earthly, they are heavenly creatures. They must be given the liberty to enjoy their heavenly life, just as we are entitled to experience the life of this earth.

No doubt there is a certain limit to it. One may say, 'We will not let them break the things in the house; we will not let them spoil things; we will not let them trouble us in our work'; but all that is earthly. In point of fact, the guardian has no right to prevent the baby from enjoying its free activity, and every effort must be made by the guardian to allow this. In the children's play, in their hustle and bustle, in their crying and jumping and running and climbing their soul is expressing itself. We call it naughty, but they do not consider it so. Even if it is called naughtiness they think it is lawful for them; and it is so. And because we control them and make them suit our own lives, their energy, their enthusiasm, their spirit become limited; and in this way their real progress is hampered.

At this age a child is conscious of the higher spheres. Many times children have known much more about what was going on at the front during the war than even the authorities knew. They knew intuitively, sometimes in their dreams, sometimes in a kind of deep imagination; and when they predicted something, that thing happened. And that shows that at four, five, six, and



seven years the child is extremely intuitive, because at that time it is under the influence of the jinn.

At the age of three, four, and five the baby is very imitative; it likes to imitate everything it sees. And the best way of educating the baby is to bring before it everything that is worth imitating. For instance, sounds, notes, rhythm, and anything that is pertaining to tone and rhythm build and beautify the character, and form the foundation of character in babyhood. And it is best that till the age of five the baby should not be taught anything in the way of figures or alphabet or letters. Regularity is the only thing that can be taught to children at that age, and without their knowing it; regularity in sleeping, in waking up, in food, in playing, and in sitting quiet.

I was very much interested in what Madame Montessori told me when I was in Italy, that besides all the activities that she gives to the children, she makes them keep a silence; and after a little time they like it so much that they prefer silence to their activity. And it interested me still more to see a little girl of about six years of age who, when the time of silence came, went and closed the windows and closed the door, and put away all the things that she was playing with; and then she came and sat in her little chair and closed her eyes, and she did not open them for about three or four minutes. You could see on her innocent face an angelic expression. It seemed she preferred those five minutes silence to all the playing of the whole day. Children enjoy silence when they have become accustomed to it. Silence is not a strain on a child. Only in the beginning it might appear to be disagreeable to a child, who is eager to play and run about, to be sitting and closing its eyes. For children to sit and close their eyes seems hard in the beginning. But when they have had some silence every day for a week, they begin to enjoy the happiness of silence.

Sometimes there is a tendency on the part of the guardian or of those around a baby to enjoy its irritability. It is a kind of entertainment for them. Because they love the baby they are amused by the little gesture of annoyance on its part. But by appreciating it, by recognizing it, by observing it, they develop that characteristic. The best thing, however, would be to overlook



it, not to acknowledge it, not to be conscious of it, not to feel for one moment that the child is irritable; because once the guardian takes no notice of it, that tendency of the baby will begin to decrease.

There is also a tendency on the part of the guardian to be annoyed at the irritability of the child. That too is wrong; because by being annoyed one gives to the baby, just like fuel to the fire, the energy to be more irritable. Guardianship of a baby requires great patience; and the more patient one is, the more wise one is with the baby, the more one can help its soul's progress.

Very often behind the irritability either of a child or of a grown-up person there is a hidden reason, and it may be a physical reason. There may be something physically wrong which others do not know of; and they only think that this child is irritable by nature. They attribute the irritability to the child, instead of seeing that there is something physically wrong with it. By trying to find out what it is, one will be able to tolerate that condition better.

There is another tendency in the baby, and that is that during its development it has varied moods. Some days it is loving, other days it is less loving; some days it is more angelic, other days it is less angelic; in this way it changes its moods. In this phase the greatest care should be taken that all such moods of the child are controlled, without forcing one's own will too much upon it. For instance, if the baby is very much inclined to cry, to laugh, to destroy things, or to play, the best thing is to direct its attention to something else. If it is laughing very much, one should direct its attention to something that will keep its mind busy, that will make it more balanced, and take its attention away from the idea that makes it laugh. If it is crying, the same thing may be done: to divert the child's attention from the object, the thought, or the condition which makes it cry, and in this way to bring about a balance in its life.

Is there any place in the life of a baby for religion? The answer is that the best opportunity to sow the seed of religion is in babyhood, because it is at that time that the angelic quality is fresh and the jinn quality is beginning to develop. And in what way

should one teach the child religion? The ancient lesson of the God-ideal, which all the prophets and teachers have given and which will always prove to be the best lesson there is, is to give the child the idea of God: God of goodness, God of beauty, God of compassion, God of love, God of harmony. If in any child there is a spiritual tendency, it will show even from the age of five years. Love for prayer for instance, love for the God-ideal; the feeling for something sacred, a reverence for something religious, it might seem that this was already there, that the child was born with it.

Sometimes the religious, devotional, and spiritual attributes are distinctly seen in a child who is growing from infancy to childhood. The spiritual tendency is inborn, and when it shows itself in a child one should know that the child has brought it from above. The child is very often more responsive to the God-ideal than a grown-up person; because the grown-up person, by being absorbed in the things of the world, has lost the idea of God. He has the world before him. The child has not yet the world before him; and therefore the child is more capable of conceiving the thought of God than a grown-up person. And if this opportunity is lost, then when they are grown-up they feel that something is missing in their life, and they think, 'If only I had known about God, it would have been much better.' But now it is too late; now it is difficult for them to conceive the thought of God, because the seed was not sown at the right time.

There are numberless souls who, because their parents have not given them the idea of God, find it most difficult to conceive it; and at the same time their soul is constantly seeking for it. But the guardian must be most careful that he does not sow the seed of bigotry with the religious ideal. If he does this, then a great harm is done to the child. By bigotry is meant this: first there is a time when a person believes in God, and that is a very blessed time; and when he is more evolved in the wordly life then he fights for his Church, that is then his main idea; and when he is still more evolved, then he despises other creeds. And so a person evolves higher and higher; it is that evolution which is called bigotry. If a child is impressed from its childhood by that spirit, then the main object is defeated. The main object of religion is



to elevate the child to the higher ideal; and that can be done by giving it the key of religion, and that key is the God-ideal.

The guardian must also endeavour not to give the child heavier food than it can digest in the form of religion. Very often there are guardians filled with a philosophical idea, with a special idea of religion, with an ethical conception of religion, who wish to inspire the child at that age. But in this way they do harm; because instead of giving the first lesson they have perhaps given a lesson which is too advanced for the child, and it is all lost. It is just like giving too much water to a growing plant which dies because of the flood of water that it cannot absorb. There are very many guardians who talk philosophically to a baby, because their philosophical conception is so overpowering that they think it must be poured out on the child; but if the child is too full of it, then it will only forget it. We must become children with the child in order to bring it up. We must speak in its own language, and we must only give it what it can understand.

Once a nurse came to me and said, 'This child asks wonderful questions, and I cannot answer them'. I said, 'What are the questions?' She replied, 'When this child was going to say its evening prayer before going to bed, it asked me, 'If God is in heaven, up in heaven, then why must I bow low to the earth?'' The nurse was very perplexed; she did not know how to answer; but if this child had not been answered, from that moment its belief would have gone, because that is the time when the soul is beginning to enquire into life and its mystery. I asked the child, 'What did you say?' The child explained it to me, and I said, 'Yes, God is in heaven, but where are His feet? On the earth. By bending towards the earth, you are touching His feet'. That gave it the explanation that although the head of God is in heaven, the feet of God are on the earth; and therefore touching the earth is touching the feet of God. It was quite satisfied.

Very often children are on the point of losing their belief because their belief is just like a young plant, a little seedling that comes out of the earth; and if this is not well guarded, it can be destroyed in a moment. Therefore one must be most careful. It does not matter if a grown-up person has a belief today and gives it up tomorrow. It does not matter because his belief was nothing.



But a child's belief is different. A child's belief is something serious. It has no doubt; what it believes, it believes seriously; and therefore its belief is real belief. If that belief is destroyed it is a great pity and a great loss.

A child one day came to its guardian very perplexed because a boy had said to it, 'Do you believe in Santa Claus? If you do then it is not right, because there never was such a being as Santa Claus.' This child was very disappointed, because it had just written a letter to Santa Claus before Christmas. And in its great despair it came to the guardian to ask, 'Is it true that Santa Claus exists, or is it not true?' Now suppose the guardian had said, 'It is true', then in four or five years' time the child would have come and said, 'No, it is not true'; and if he had said, 'No, it is not true', then all the child's belief would have been totally destroyed. It would have been completely changed if the guardian had said, 'It is not true'. That would have rooted out, just by saying no, all the innocent religious belief from the heart of that child. But the guardian said to it, 'Remember, all that the mind can conceive exists. If it does not exist on the physical plane, it exists in the sphere of mind. So never say it does not exist. To the one who says that it does not exist, say that it exists in the sphere of mind'; and the child was very impressed by this answer.

A child can remember such an answer all its life. If the child evolved so that it could touch the heavens, it would still believe it. Never in life need it say, 'I do not believe it', and at the same time this is a belief that is tangible. It can never say, 'It does not exist, it is not real'. It can say, 'It is real', both as a child and as a grown-up person.

It is best to keep the child ignorant of all stories of ghosts as long as one can. Ghost stories impress a child and interest it very much, and by this its mind goes in another direction, a direction which is not suitable for it. The best thing is always to avoid conversation about ghosts and spirits, and also about the devil. And the best way of avoiding it is to turn it into a joke. A witty answer that will turn the mind of the child from the idea of ghosts to a joke would be the best thing. But at the same time to say there is no such thing as a ghost or devil is taking upon oneself a

very great responsibility; it is denying something which is written in the Bible and in other scriptures, and could make a child an unbeliever, so that when it grows up it will not believe in anything.

It is essential that in childhood a religious teaching be given. If the guardian is not able to discuss religion with the child, it is better not to try but to give the child the habit of sitting in silence for a moment, and thinking about the higher ideal, God.

The way of Christ was to give humanity the ideal of God, God as the heavenly Father. And what was the reason? The reason was that it is conceivable. Even a child can understand that idea: Father, heavenly Father, the real Father. Besides, all the different names that the prophets and teachers have given to God are really not appropriate; it was only to make people understand. Their minds could only conceive those names: the Judge, or the Creator, or the Supreme Being, or the King of the Day of Judgment. They are not the names of God; all names given are not the names of God. God cannot be limited to those names; they are too small for God. Yet at the same time it is the best one can do to make the ideal of God as concrete to the mind as possible. What strength, what a help it is for the child to think from early childhood that there is a Friend unknown, unseen; to be able to say, 'There is Someone who hears my prayers. Someone who in my troubles and difficulties can be with me, Someone whose blessing I ask, Someone who protects me, Someone who is like my mother and my father and yet unknown, unseen'. Even if the child is not able to make it clear to itself, yet unconsciously it will feel it like a support from within. It will feel that it can stand with that support, a support so great that at all times, whether the child has its parents or not, in all conditions it can feel, 'There is Someone who is always there with me'. And if this ideal is built from childhood by wise guardians, it helps the child for its whole life.

## ii

The guardian need not be discouraged to find obstinacy and temper and selfishness in the little child. He must know that



either the baby has inherited it or it is the result of some defect in its physical health, and it must be treated most wisely. Fire is increased by fire, and the plant of temper is watered by anger. The more the guardian reacts, the more he will encourage that tendency in the baby. To become annoyed with the child who is in a temper is to fan the spark of anger in it. The best way is first to get the baby to respond to him, and then with that response to make it act according to the will of the guardian.

If the obstinacy of a baby can be directed to its own advantage, then it can be benefited by the obstinacy. Obstinacy can be very useful; for most of the great people in this world have become great by a certain obstinacy in their character, because obstinacy is a strength and a power in itself. An obstinate businessman can be successful, an obstinate warrior can win, an obstinate politician can accomplish his purpose, an obstinate industrialist can accomplish great things. Obstinacy, therefore, if rightly directed, can be of great use. One only needs to mould the mind of the child in such a direction that its obstinacy may become fruitful. It is the obstinate child who will sit and finish a task that is given to it; if it had not that obstinacy it would not do it. Sometimes from obstinacy comes the spirit of rivalry, and very often the spirit of rivalry becomes the means to success.

Manners are most important, and especially at four and five years of age the lessons of manners must be given. The first lesson to be taught is knowing when to come near and be loving, and when to sit quiet and obedient in the presence of the guardian. If the guardian is showing affection to the baby all the time the baby becomes spoiled. There must be change. There must be a time when the child is loved; it requires love, love is its sustenance; but there is another time when the child must be obedient; it must sit or stand or do something that it is told to do; and at that time there is no display of tenderness.

There is one thing that must be taught from babyhood, and that is not to argue. If that tendency is not suppressed from babyhood, it will grow unconsciously perhaps and afterwards the guardian will find it most disagreeable. A person in whom this tendency is not checked from childhood will show insolence in



some form or other, no matter how good the manners he learned afterwards. Also, if the child contradicts it should always be checked, even to the extent that the guardian may say to the child, 'As you are young you do not know enough. Even if to you it appears wrong, there is some right in it. You do not know and therefore you may not contradict; and you may not contradict your guardian before others. If you think that your guardians are wrong, when the others are gone you may come to your guardians and say, "That was not right, what you said"; but you may not say it before others, because you do not know enough about what your guardian has said. There may be some reason in it.' When you have said this to the baby once or twice or thrice it understands. A child is easier to work with than grown-up people.

At the same time the baby should be inspired with the spirit of self-respect. There may be something delicious on the table, something attractive in the room, something beautiful within its reach, there may be some gold and silver coins lying loose in its presence, but its natural tendency of taking them, of losing them, of breaking them, of spoiling them, must be checked. And how must it be checked? The baby must not think that it is forced to keep away from what attracts it, but it must feel that it is self-respect not to look at it; that it is glad to take its eyes away from the sweet that is on the table, that it feels a great pride and honour to think that it will not even look at it. That teaches the baby patience; and its self-respect gives it more joy than even the sweet and the toy would give it, because it touches its very being; it wakens the soul when the child feels pride in refusing something that in its heart it is attracted to. This does not mean that the baby should be denied all that is good and beautiful. No, it must be taught that when something is given, it can be accepted; but when it is not given, then the baby must be proud enough to control itself.

The child must be taught not to be over-enthusiastic about anything that appeals to it, whether it is a sweet, a toy, or something beautiful; it must be taught not to show too great an appreciation. Because it is a humiliation, it is making oneself small before the object that one is enthusiastic about. The baby must be too

proud to be enthusiastic. And remember that a baby will begin to appreciate this, if not in the beginning, then a little later. Self-control gives the child such a feeling of power and satisfaction that it begins to enjoy it.

A child must be checked in the feeling, 'You have taken more than I', or 'My little brother, or my little sister, has received more than was given to me'. That must be stopped. It must not judge; it must appreciate it if the little brother or sister has got more; it must be glad. It will not be glad naturally, but if it is taught then it will be glad; it will enjoy being glad. Virtues are virtues because they give joy once they are practised. If a virtue does not give joy, it is not a virtue.

Very often guardians do not attach importance to what toys they give the baby to play with. There are certain toys which have the effect of making it lazy; there are certain toys which will make it confused, or which will bring about stupidity, or make the child irritable or timid. Unconsciously they have that effect upon the child. Besides, playing with certain toys does not bring any benefit. When we think that every moment of babyhood is so precious in the life of the soul, and that this soul is to be denied something that can add to its progress, it seems a great pity.

There must be discrimination even in choosing toys, as to what toy will inspire the children and help them, and will elevate their souls. There are many meaningless toys with horrible faces, horrible toys with nothing beautiful about them. The child likes them because it likes anything. Sometimes a child likes a doll without arms or legs. But we must give the child toys which are finished and not without arms or legs.

Sometimes it likes horrible toys most. For instance, what does a teddy-bear do to the child? Does it inspire the child, does it elevate its soul? It does nothing. On the contrary, it gives to the receptive mind of the child the impression of an animal, which is not good. Very often there are toys which give no inspiration, which have no action, and therefore have a confusing effect upon the child. One gives the child a teddy-bear because one thinks that it likes it. But why must we give something to the child because the child likes it? A friendship with a bear!



There is much else to occupy one's mind. Besides, there are certain toys which give no exercise to the mind and no inspiration to the child, and that makes it lazy. Anything constructive is good. For instance, a train that runs, or an instrument that sounds, that is good for a child, or anything that it can construct with, as the pieces of a puzzle that a child can make a picture from, or the little bricks and pillars and different things from which it can make a house or something else; all such toys are good. In short every toy must be constructive, must lead to some purpose; that should be the guiding principle.

It is not very good for the child to play with animals. If the child can have a kind feeling towards the animal it is quite enough; because every association has its special effect on the child. And very often the tendency of the guardian is to think that the child likes the animal very much. That may be so, but it is not good for the child; from a psychological point of view it is sometimes bad for it.

Boys' toys should not be given to girls, neither should girls' toys be given to boys. If boys get accustomed to playing with the toys of girls, then their mind goes in another direction; and it is the same with girls. It is better that the girl has her own toys and the boy his own toys. Both must have toys appropriate for them, and very often guardians do not discriminate between them.

One may wonder if it is bad for children to play with tin soldiers. Yes, it is, because it develops a tendency towards fighting. But it is a delicate and very subtle question, and one must not lay down rules about it. What a terrible thing it would be if as a child a person did not play with bow and arrows and sword or anything that is soldier-like, and then when he was twenty-one years of age, the country called him to defend it and he knew nothing about warfare, for he had never received any preparation for it! And another question arises: when the whole nation is ready for war and there is one youth, perhaps, who feels, 'I will not go because I am not in agreement with the principle', it is his right to disagree with the principle, but at the same time he is willing to accept the order and peace that is maintained by the nation, to share all the privileges of being a member of the nation. He

shares them, but he refuses what the majority wants him to do. It is against his principle certainly; but what the majority wishes him to do he refuses although he does not refuse the privileges. If he refuses the privileges also it is different. If he does like the sages, if he goes away from the country and stays in solitude under the shade of a tree, it is different. If he does not want money, if he says, 'I do not compete with you; I do not want to have any benefit from your progress in life; I do not keep any money that a thief can steal from me, for which I might then have to come to your court', then it is different. But if a person is ready to share all privileges that belong to the country, and then when the need of defence comes says, 'It is against my principle', that is quite another matter. Never think that this means standing up for war. But at the same time let the little boys be capable of everything.

Every little manner that is sweet in the child, every good little tendency it shows, should be emphasized and appreciated. One must not take it silently. Never think that by showing the child appreciation it will become conceited. No, the child will be encouraged. It will be just like watering a plant when you appreciate anything that is nice in the manner of a baby. And there is never a time in one's whole life when one appreciates a word of praise so much as when one is a baby. The child really appreciates it and is encouraged to do the same again.

Then there is the question of blame. When the child has done anything wrong, the first thing is to reason with it, to convince it. And if it is not convinced at once, then try a second time, and then a third, a fourth. Never be disappointed, even if one has to try ten times to convince the baby by argument.

Very often a guardian thinks it is too much waste of time to argue with a baby who does not understand; it is more easily done when one scolds and finishes with it. But that does not finish it. Much scolding blunts the spirit of the child. The spirit of the child must be kept so fine and so sharp that the slightest glance could make it feel hurt. But if one scolds the child all the time, it blunts its spirit, and the child becomes worse and worse.

Never for one moment imagine that the child will not take in



your reasoning. If not the first time, it will take it in the second or the third time. One must continue to reason with the child; and by doing so the guardian brings the child closer to his spirit, because the child feels a friendship between itself and the guardian. By reasoning one draws the child nearer to one's own spirit. And if the child does not listen to the reasoning and the guardian has reasoned for many days, then the next thing to try is temptation; to tempt it with a sweet, with a flower, with something that it likes, with love, with appreciation; to say, 'You have done right', 'Now you have done it nicely, and I will give you a toy,' 'I shall give you a sweet if you will do it'. Show appreciation, tempt it to do right. This is the next step. It is preferable that the child should learn with reasoning; but if not, then a reward must make it listen.

If even a reward is not enough, then the third way is scolding, punishment. But scolding must be short. The scolding must be in the voice, in the way it is said. It must not be hard, nor must it be harsh. There must be a certain tone that the child at once realizes is scolding. One must avoid scolding as much as one can, but if one cannot help it then that is the third way. There is a wrong method which guardians very often adopt, perhaps in the East more than in the West, and that is to frighten a child by saying some bogey is coming or something like that; if it continues to be naughty something will come to frighten it, a ghost or a spirit. That is the worst thing that one could do to a child, because every such shock takes away a great deal from the enthusiasm of its spirit to progress. It hampers the progress of the soul to be frightened by anything.

### iii

Very often a stubborn child who does not listen and who does not change, by being asked to turn around three times changes its point of view at once. If one wants to make the child feel more deeply, if one tells the proud child to go and stand in the corner with its back turned to everybody, it really feels hurt. One can also ask it to go out of the room and stand outside the door. That hurts the child still more.

Is it right to punish a child? Punishment is natural. Every soul is punished in some way or other. For everything one does there is a punishment; it is the law of nature. The law of life has punishment just the same. But punishment for the child must be gentle. It is better to avoid a severe punishment, but rather to give a little mental punishment, which makes the child realize that it is being punished. Suppose one told the child to go from one place to another five times or ten times; in point of fact, walking up and down can be an enjoyment for the child, but by the very fact that you have given it as a punishment the child does not like it. The feeling, 'I am punished', in itself corrects it. In order to punish you do not need to torture a child; you only need make it realize that it is being punished. That is quite enough.

Sometimes guardians think it is necessary to slap a child, to slap its face. Slapping is sometimes dangerous, because there are veins and delicate organs in the forehead and on the temples, and slapping could cause a condition which though not manifest at the time, might become so after twenty or forty years. And therefore instead of slapping it is far better to tweak the ears. Punishment has a very bad effect when it blunts the sharpness of the child's spirit. Very often punishment may work with the child, but in some way or other it blunts its fineness; and therefore one must try to do without it if one can. Then, after giving good advice and counsel and encouragement, and after showing appreciation and doing everything possible, the last thing is to tweak the ears.

Boys are sometimes more stubborn than girls; and if you give them a little punishment in the form of gymnastics it corrects them. If a boy is told to sit down and stand up fifty times, it helps him in his gymnastics, and at the same time he feels punished. Boys are difficult to control, and can easily become insolent if they are not trained from their babyhood. A girl by nature is thoughtful, and a boy by nature is the contrary. When a boy is thoughtful it means that life has taught him.

Very often both boys and girls can be taught by means of repetition. For instance, if you told the boy to repeat a hundred times, 'I will not make pencil marks on the wall', after repeating



it for a hundred times he will be impressed by it. There is a great difference in the effect of making a child repeat a phrase and making him write the phrase a hundred times. If you make the child write the phrase a hundred times the effect is one quarter compared with the effect if you had made him say it a hundred times; that is the best punishment you could give him. While he is repeating a hundred times he becomes impatient, he becomes tired and he is displeased with it; at the same time he is impressed that he is being punished. When one asks a child to stand for a long time and repeat, 'I will not be mischievous', in fifteen minutes time it will take away a great deal of that spirit of mischievousness from it.

One may ask what one is to do if the child will not take the punishment, will not repeat a phrase, for instance. But the child will surely do it. If from babyhood it is not controlled, then it becomes insolent and refuses afterwards, but if from babyhood it is taught to obey a normal child will not refuse.

How should one treat a child when it is angry? By not partaking of its anger. That is the first principle. When the guardian loses his temper because of the child's anger, then everything goes wrong, because then there is a fire on both sides. The child is not helped in that way. It is best to keep calm and direct the child's attention to something else. If the child is in a temper and the guardian gives it a punishment, that does not do it any good. It is wasted.

There is, however, another time when the punishment may be usefully given. Punishment may be given when the child is in its balanced, normal condition. For instance, if you held a court in the house, where the children could be judged at a time when they had forgotten all about what they had done, then they would remember. That is the time when whatever punishment is given will have effect. But when the child is cross and the punishment is given immediately, it is lost. At that time every effort must be made to take away the temper by kindness, by sympathy. But very often that is where the guardian makes a mistake.

Must a child obey without understanding? There is a vast difference between the mentality and experience of the child and

of the guardian. Very often the child will not know why it is told, 'You must not do it'; and if the child always asked, 'Why must I not do it?' then it would be difficult, because very often it cannot even be explained. And very often it had better not be explained; very often it is better that the child only listens to the guardian and does not argue. Just as the musicians in the orchestra are accustomed to look at the conductor's baton, so a baby must be taught to look at the glance of its guardian. And if the guardian is wise enough to conduct the action of the baby from morning till evening by his glance alone, he is sure to train that child to be a most promising soul in the future.

And now another question arises: how much must a baby be kept in control, and how much must it be allowed to play with its playmates? There must be certain times when the baby is allowed to play with its playmates. But the guardian must select them, because the association in childhood is more responsible for the baby's future than the association when grown-up. Very few people think about this. Mostly the tendency of the parents is to think that any child that comes along can play with their child. But when it comes to home education it is not the same thing; that system will not do; because home education is an individual education, while school education is different. There they are all together, but home education is something else, it is a different ideal. And this must be remembered, that school education without home education is not sufficient.

The greatest drawback today is that home education is lacking, and only school education is given. And therefore in many personalities there is something missing that ought to have come from home. If there were thousands of schools most wisely and wonderfully organized, they still could not take the place of home education. Home education is the foundation of school education; and that opportunity of being educated at home must not be denied to a child, because it is a great blessing.

There must be discrimination in regard to the playmates that one chooses for the baby. And the time must be limited so that the baby plays with its playmates during that time only. But if the child is allowed to run wild in play and there is no limit to it, then no training is given and it is not education. There



is need for play, but only for a certain time and no longer.

Regularity in life is the rhythm of life; and the more the rhythm is maintained in life, the better it is. It is not necessary for many grown-up persons to handle a baby; it is better that only one handles it. It is just like an orchestra and its conductor. If there were four conductors directing the orchestra, they would spoil it. Even if there were four hundred musicians playing there must be only one conductor. It is the same thing with the guardian. If there is more than one person to guide the life of the child, it will be spoiled. In the case of the two parents one must become the hand of the other. But if both wish to manage their child, then it will be spoiled.

If the baby is an orphan, what can one do? That is destiny; one can only be sorry about it. And those who are blessed by Providence and who have to look after an orphan, should consider their responsibility as that of a parent, of a guardian towards the orphan that is in their charge. But every woman and every man in this world should consider it their duty, whenever they are in contact with a new soul, to be as parents to that soul. For in the total scheme of life all the elder ones have to take the part of the parents to the younger ones, while those have to take the part of the children to those who are older. So that we each have our older ones and our younger ones to look up to and to look after.

The greatest ideal that one can give a baby is to look up to its parents. That is the first ideal; and if at that time the baby has not received this ideal, then all his life he will have no ideal, because there will be no basis for it. Someone went to the Prophet Mohammad and said, 'Prophet, I am so spiritually inclined, and I would so much like to follow your Message and come and meditate in your presence. But I am still young and my parents need me at home. What shall I do?' The Prophet said, 'Remain at home first, because some consideration is due to your parents.' One might think that the Prophet was a greater ideal still; why did the Prophet deny him that ideal, why did he send him home? Because the Prophet thought that was the first ideal. If the youth did not reach the first ideal, how could he get to the second ideal? If he did not look up to his parents, did not appreciate them or feel grateful to them, how could he appreciate the Prophet?

It is the parents' duty to give that ideal of themselves to their own child. Not for their own sakes, but for the good of the child. That ideal must be given from babyhood so that the child looks up to its parents as it would look up to the King or Queen, or to God or to a prophet. When the ideal is sown in that way, in the child from the beginning, then it will flourish, and then that ideal will become a guiding torch in the life of the soul.



### CHAPTER III

## THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

### i

WHEN the child is six years of age babyhood ends and childhood begins. There are cases of earlier or later development, but as a rule the change comes at six or seven years. This is the age of great conflict because the soul is taking a new step forward in life. And this inner conflict very often seems troublesome to the guardian. The child is restless and obstinate, too active and less responsive. At the age of seven this ends and a new life begins. The child naturally becomes calmer, more harmonious, more responsive, and yields to any advice that the guardian would like to give.

Today many think that at six years old the child should go to school; but this is a mistaken idea. This is the time when the child should be at home, because six years is the time of conflict, and seven is the beginning of a new era for the child. If at that time the child misses home education and is sent to school to be trained with other children, that takes away the distinctive care which should be given to it at that age. If the child has once been sent to school, one should not take it away from the school; but at the same time it would be better if one could manage to keep the child from school and give it home education till it is nine years of age. But if the child would like to go to school should one not send it? One does not send the child to school for its pleasure; and also the guardian can give pleasure to the child by giving it the training which it likes at home. It is not necessary that the guardian should teach the child letters and figures at home. The earlier one teaches a child, the earlier his mentality will wear out in life; and if one does not teach him, it only means that when the mind is mature it will grasp more quickly. Just as the voice producer says that if you begin to sing at a certain age your voice will flourish, and if you sing before that age it is not good, so

it is with the mentality of the child. If the child begins before its time, it only means that in the end the mind will wear out before its time.

Where there are many children in the house and the guardian cannot give all his attention to each, this means a little more responsibility; but at the same time it is easier too, because for the guardian with so many children at the same time there is a greater opportunity and greater practice.

What generally happens is that guardians become so tired taking care of the child that they feel a great burden lifted from their shoulders when the child goes to school, for then they feel comfortable, being quite free for six or eight hours, because one child in the house can be equal to one hundred children. Guardians think that they love the child, and very often they believe that they make all sacrifices; but at the same time when it comes to bearing with an energetic child in the house, then there is a doubt. It does not mean lack of love, but they think, 'I would be happier if the child were away for a while'. But they only think so because they do not know what a great opportunity it is to begin to train and to guide the child. It is an opportunity for its whole life; and if the guardian misses it, it means a loss to the child.

The reason why the guardians are anxious to send the child to school is that they are conscious of competitive life. They see how there is competition in business and industry and on all sides of life; and in order to train the child soon enough, so that it may take up life's duties and responsibilities, they wish to do it too early. The consequence is that the child has lost the best time it could have had at home; a time of rest and comfort, and freedom from all anxiety about the work that it has to do at school; so that its mind could have matured properly, and it could have begun the school work at the right time. It is because the generality of people are so competitive in every profession and business, that we make the coming generation suffer; we deprive the children of their freedom, of the time which they ought to have at home to play and to think little and enjoy life more, and to keep away from worries and anxieties. We take away that best time in the life of the child by sending it to school.

A proper rhythm should be given to the child in babyhood.



This is the only training necessary, in order that it may be neither too excitable nor too lethargic; and that its interest may grow, and that, while playing, it may get familiar with nature and gain what knowledge nature can give. When a child is six years of age it is not able to grasp an ideal, and any ideal given to it at that age is wrong. Only evenness of rhythm should be maintained in the everyday life of the child. Its natural tendency is to laugh too much, to play too much. Everything that it is interested in it does more than it should do; and if the guardian can try to keep it normal and balanced it will make a great difference.

At the age of seven the child is ready to conceive any ideal given to it, because that is the beginning of childhood. And now comes the question: what ideal should be given? The first ideal should be the ideal of a respectful attitude towards its elders; because once grown-up without this ideal a soul never learns respect. He only learns the form, but it does not come from within. Among a hundred persons who are compelled to act respectfully there is perhaps one person who is respectful in spirit; ninety-nine persons are compelled by conventionality to act respectfully, and that action gives no joy. But when that attitude comes from within, then it comes with joy; it gives joy to others and it brings joy to oneself.

Today we see the general attitude of insolence increasing as time goes on. It is the outcome of negligence on the part of the guardians at the time when it should have been taken in hand. Many think that this attitude ought to be taught in school, but the school is not responsible for it. It belongs to home education, and it is the guardian who is responsible for it. And it is at this particular age of seven that it must be given. Of course if a child has not a respectful attitude, one can very easily accept it. One smiles at the lack of it. One thinks, 'It is a little child, what do you expect from it?' One's love and affection for the child make one think, 'Oh, what does it matter? Is it not a child?' But to take it like that is to work against its future. This is just the time when a respectful attitude must be developed. The tendency to argue, the tendency to hit back, the tendency to refuse, to disobey, the tendency to speak in a disagreeable tone, even the tendency to frown and make a disagreeable face, all these disrespectful

tendencies grow with the years in childhood. One does not think that they are of any importance, but when they are allowed to grow they grow as enemies, bitter enemies of that child. And, as Sa'di says, *Ba adab ba nasib, bi adab bi nasib*, 'The one who has respect in him, he will be fortunate surely; and the one who lacks it will be unfortunate'.

The lack of this tendency is a misfortune for man. And besides the man who has no respect for another has no respect for himself. He cannot have it, he has not that sense. Self-respect only comes to the man who has respect for another; you will always find in a disrespectful person a lack of self-respect.

Another ideal is a regard for the guardian. By guardians are meant parents or those who take care of the child and take the place of the parents. And regard is not only respect, it is more than respect. It is the feeling that 'this is my guardian', a feeling that 'I owe him something', a feeling that 'there is a certain duty by which I am bound to my guardian', the realization of the sacredness of that duty. And in this feeling there is a joy. If the child is inspired with this sense at that particular time, one will see that it will enjoy that feeling every time it experiences it.

When we look at life and see how many grown-up people have lost absolutely all regard for their guardians it makes one feel that the world is really wicked. There are so many souls who have no consideration for those who have brought them up from their childhood when they were helpless. It is very sad to see how many guardians and parents are treated neglectfully. And then in some rare case, when you see the devotion of a daughter to her aged mother, a daughter who has sacrificed everything in her life in order to make her aged mother comfortable and to help her, it seems so beautiful. And when you see a grown-up man who has a regard for his mother and father, so that while managing his affairs and having duties and responsibilities of life, he yet at the same time thinks of his aged parents, it is something so beautiful to see and there is such a blessing in it.

One can inspire this beautiful tendency in childhood; but if that time is missed then it becomes difficult. It is not only that it is beautiful to be able to give some pleasure and to render some service to the parents, but those who become considerate in their



lives begin to see that this is the greatest privilege and blessing that one could have in life.

May a child give counsel to its parents? It would be disrespectful if even a grown-up child stood up and gave counsel to its parents, unless it was asked to do so. Besides a child is a child even if it is fifty years old, and if it does not feel a child with its parents it is missing a great deal in its life. There is a story of the King of Udaipur, who was still very sad a year after his mother's death. One day his friends told him, 'Now you have reached the age of fifty and you are a father, even a grandfather. Nobody's parents last for ever. As long as she lived it was a privilege, but now she is gone and you must forget your sorrow'. He said, 'Yes, I am trying to forget; but there is one thing I cannot forget, and that is the nickname by which she called me. Everyone is respectful towards me, everyone calls me "Maharana"; but she alone called me by a nickname, and I loved it so much.'

No matter what age one reaches, if one does not feel like a baby, like a child with one's parents, it is a pity. It is a great joy to feel like a baby, no matter at what age. It is a great privilege, a blessing in life when one's parents are living, and when one has that chance of acting like a baby. It is the most beautiful thing in the world.

No doubt it is very easy to be insolent, and it is very amusing to teach others; and when a person is grown-up he may also try to teach his parents. They are old and weak now, and perhaps also declining mentally; naturally they give in. But there is no beauty in it. The beauty is to give a counsel without giving counsel, if necessary even without speaking. On the other hand, thoughtful parents, when a child has won their confidence, naturally wish for counsel. But when the child has the right understanding he will have the right attitude, he will never make the counsel seem like a counsel; he will always put it in such a way that it will seem as if it came from the parents and not from himself.

The third ideal that one can inspire in the child is a sense of pride, a self-respecting attitude; because this is the time when the child could lose its self-respect and that little sense of pride or honour which is now growing in it. It is natural to see the child pleased with a toy or attracted to a sweet that is placed before it; but it

is better still when you offer to the child a toy or a sweet which it likes and it refuses it out of self-respect. It is pleasant to see a child saying to its guardian, 'Please get me this,' and 'Buy this for me,' or 'I would like to have this'; but it is better still to see the child holding back its desire out of self-respect. If pride is not developed at that age, then what is life going to be without pride? Nothing. In the days when communications were not as they are now, it happened that children of good families came to a country far from home and where they were unknown, either because they were exiled or because circumstances or destiny had brought them there. And what made them prove to be what they were was pride, not pearls or jewels or money or anything. A sense of honour is such a great treasure that, in the absence of all jewels and money and wealth, this will prove to be most valuable.

In what must this pride consist? It must consist in the sense of contentment. If the child understands, 'Where I am not wanted I need not be', or, 'No matter how much better an object belonging to another person may be, or how beautiful is the fruit or the flower, or anything that belongs to him, I must not even show that I would like to have it', that sense of honour is riches itself. How many parents strive all their life to collect money to give comfort to their children afterwards! But how much can they depend on that money, and especially at this time when money is changing so quickly in value that it takes no time for a rich man to become poor? If money makes a person rich, then those riches are not reliable. But the parents can give riches which cannot be taken away from the child; and these riches are in the form of ennobling its spirit.

May not the feeling of honour develop a false pride, one might ask, and how can one prevent this? This is the guardian's responsibility. Anything exaggerated and anything carried to the extreme is bad. One can become too proud and one can think too much of honour. But generally the life of the world is so wicked that instead of increasing the sense of honour it does the opposite. There are so many needs, there are so many wants; there are so many conditions and situations which instead of raising a person pull him down. Therefore the effort on the part of the guardian should be to give a hand to the soul to climb upward, instead of



letting it go downward. There are many influences which pull downward. One must inspire the child with such pride and honour that in poverty or wealth, and in all conditions it may prove to be a noble soul.

Then there is a fourth ideal that one should inspire in the child, That ideal is thoughtfulness in speaking or in doing anything. This means the child must become conscious of its child's place; it must not try to take the place of the elder one. It is a child; it must keep its place. For instance, if two elderly people are discussing something and the child comes in and says, 'No, no, it is not so,' it is out of place. Maybe according to its mind it is not so, but it is not entitled to say so. It must keep its place. That is what is meant by thoughtfulness.

Care must be taken of everything; for instance, when the child wants to sit down somewhere, if it does not consider those who must be seated first, but first takes a place for itself, letting others wait; or if when entering a place or leaving it, the child goes forward and keeps back those who should go first; or when at the dinner-table, a child holds out his hand first, before the others have moved; all such things must be taken care of.

In speech, in movement, in action the child must be conscious of its childhood and must know its place. If not what happens? How few thoughtful people one meets in one's everyday life! When one sees the ordinary life in the world of today there is no end to the lack of consideration. Why? Because they have left out all those things which are of most importance in education; they have left them out in order to make room for mathematics. The primary cause of the loss of all the finer principles in the education given today is that it has left out the ideal.

And the fifth ideal that can be inspired in the child is the ideal of the unknown, of the unseen. If that ideal is not inspired, what does a person live for? Only to earn a loaf of bread? Only to strive in this life of competition day after day, ruining one's health, weakening one's mind, humbling one's spirit? And what does one gain? If earthly gain is all there is, it is a very small gain after all. If a higher ideal, a spiritual ideal, or God-ideal is not inspired in the child, then it is as you see today, thousands and millions of souls who are lost in the crowd, who

do not know anything except living from day to day. Their whole energy is spent in the struggle to live, and there is a still greater struggle to live more comfortably; beyond this there seems nothing else. But how long can they be contented with this ideal? A time comes when they may lose their mind. They may have millions in the bank, and yet they are not satisfied because they cannot see where they are going and whether there is anything to look forward to. It is in childhood that the spirit is responsive, and if the God-ideal is inspired at that time then one has done what Christ has said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . and all these things shall be added unto you'; one has given the child a start on the path of God; and that is the first lesson that should be given in childhood.

In training children the best way is not to show them that you are teaching them. The best thing is to be the friend of one's child. In a friendly talk with children one can inspire these things in them. Because as soon as a child knows that it is being taught it takes it heavily. But if you bring out the good that is in the child and the ideal that is in its spirit already, then the child will gladly listen to what you are saying. To rule the child is one thing, and to give loving and friendly counsel to a child is another thing. By ruling one cannot hammer these ideals into the head of a child, but by winning its affection and love you can very well train its spirit and tune it to the higher ideal.

## ii

The age of seven, eight, and nine years is considered childhood, early childhood. The beginning of this age is the beginning of a new life, a step forward into life. From seven, eight, and nine the child is conscious of the human sphere. Before that a child is conscious of the higher spheres, but at this time it is conscious of the human world. For the guardians this age of the child is of the greatest interest.

There was once a man in prison who offered the State all his wealth if he were allowed to come out of prison. It took a long time for the Government to decide. And when the Government decided that he should be released he said, 'No, now there is



no purpose in coming out. There is a child at home, and this was the time of the greatest interest, to watch it grow, between seven and nine years old. Now that age is passed I prefer to finish my sentence'.

Early childhood is like soil that is just prepared for sowing the seed. It is such a great opportunity in the life of the child, and an even greater opportunity for the guardian to sow the seed of knowledge and of righteousness in the heart of the child.

There are three subjects of interest which may not be taught to the child, but the child may be helped to interest itself in them: drawing, music, and dancing. It is at this age that the movements of the child should become graceful. But once the guardian begins to teach the child, then it is a training. This is not the time to train the child, this is the time to give free expression to its soul; to let it dance in any way that it likes to dance, a natural dance; to draw pictures just as it wishes to draw them and paint just as it wishes to paint, without any direction given to it, only interest in its work. Also if the child wishes to play an instrument or sing, let it sing in whatever way it likes. Maybe a word here and there to help it, but not to correct it, not to give it lessons on these subjects, not to let it think it is being taught; the child should only feel that it is being helped.

When we study life keenly, we find that drawing, singing, and dancing are innate or inner inclinations. A child need not be taught, they come by themselves. Every normal child has a desire to sing, a desire to draw, and also a desire to dance. Only the child begins sometimes by drawing lines and figures on the wall and spoiling the wall. The guardians can check this inclination by giving the child pencil and paper and asking it to draw pictures on it. The child will feel proud to have the material to draw. Very often guardians become cross because a child has been drawing on the wall; but it cannot be helped, it is a natural inclination.

The next inclination is that of singing. Very often an energetic child will show this inclination by shouting, by making a noise, by raising its voice; and this can be controlled. It can be best controlled by showing appreciation for a little song that the

child may sing. And if it does not know one, then let it learn one somewhere. A child who has the inclination to hear its own voice will be very glad to imitate any song it hears.

The third inclination, that of dancing, the child shows in jumping up and down and running from one corner to another. This shows restlessness and an inclination to move. And this activity can be controlled by showing appreciation for the dancing movements of little children.

There was a time when the ancient people thought very much about movements. And they were right in thinking thus about them; because whenever you see a person with awkward movements you will find something awkward in his character. A person who is deficient in brain will always show it in the awkwardness of his movements. If movements have so much to do with a person's evolution, with his mentality, then graceful movements will always help the mentality of a person. The child which is naturally inclined to movement, will take interest if it is directed towards moving with rhythm.

One might think it difficult to teach a child dancing, but one need not teach it dancing. One has only to teach the child action; for instance to turn, to take something from the ground or from the mantelpiece, to move something, any such everyday actions, and naturally all these actions turn into a dance. Besides children are very imitative, and anything that appeals to them they readily imitate. If they see graceful movements they are most eager to imitate them. That is the age when the imitating faculty begins to develop. Is it then good for children of that age to take them to dancing performances and exhibitions of pictures? Sometimes it is good, as long as one knows where one is taking them and what kind of performance it is.

There are three things that a child may be taught at this particular time: perseverance, patience, and endurance. The child may be taught perseverance in anything that it is engaged in doing. Perhaps it is mending a toy, or doing some other work; one should help the child, encourage it to continue and not to leave it before it is finished. For however small this may appear, when this habit is formed, it will show later on in big things. A soul who has learned perseverance in childhood will show



a tendency all his life to finish everything that he undertakes.

Frequently we see that this tendency is lacking among grown-up people; and this is very often the cause of their failure in life. And if their mind is restless, then it is still worse. They take up something today, and then after a week their interest is gone and there is something else; and they accomplish nothing in their lives. Life is a great opportunity, and the one who does not complete the thing he has undertaken, however small, certainly loses most in life.

Accomplishment is more valuable than what is accomplished. For instance, if a person has loosened a knot in a string, apparently he has not gained anything, the time has been spent on a very small thing; and yet the action of completing it is useful, he has built something in his spirit that will be useful to him when he wants to accomplish great works.

And now coming to the subject of patience, how can a child be taught patience? By teaching it to wait. Because a child is very impatient by nature, and if this tendency remains, then after that child is grown-up it will give it great unhappiness. When a person has no patience life becomes death for him. Patience is like death, but not to have patience is worse than death. Besides patience produces wonderful fruits, and patience is a quality which is beyond comparison with any other qualities in the world. If there is anything that gives kingliness to the soul, it is patience. What was the secret of the masters who have accomplished great things, who have inspired many and who have helped many souls? Their secret was patience. This is the time to sow the seed of patience in the child. In little things you can give the child the habit of patience. In asking for food, in wanting to go out to play, and in many other things a child shows lack of patience; yet if at that time, without hurting it, one gives it the habit of patience, the child will begin to show nobleness of spirit.

The third thing is endurance. One might ask, 'We have so much to endure in life when we are grown-up, why must we make a child endure at that age?' But the answer is that for the very reason that life will make it endure when it is grown-up, let it know from this time that there is such a thing as endurance and that every soul has to go through this. No doubt it is painful

for the loving guardian to see the child develop the faculty of endurance, but at the same time it would be more painful if the child were to grow up without this faculty. And in what way can one teach the child this? From morning till evening in the life of a child there are a thousand things happening; so many times it falls, and so many times it hurts itself, and so many times it has to swallow a bitter pill; and every time that it is not inclined to go through something that is good for it to go through, one should give it courage and strength and a word of encouragement or of advice, appreciating its endurance. In this way it will develop the enduring faculty.

In teaching the child, the best method is not to let it know that you are teaching. Teach it without the child knowing it. And that can be done by showing appreciation for the least little thing it does which you wish to develop in its spirit. The ego is born with pride, even in the child; and if you appreciate something, the child likes it too, and even sometimes more than the grown-up, because grown-up people have lost faith in words.

Very often people teach wrong nursery rhymes. It is not only a waste of time, but it has a bad effect on the child. Sometimes they are useless words, and sometimes they are meaningless words, and sometimes they are words of suggestion which may just as well be kept away from the mind of the child. Every rhyme that only rhymes is not beneficial; it must have some sense in it. And therefore the guardian must know first what he is teaching before teaching the child.

It is the same with stories. The best method of teaching children is to teach them with stories. There are fables that interest children very much, and also there is a meaning to understand. If the guardians will explain to them the meaning that is in that fable the children will become still more interested in it, and at the same time they will learn something. A story need not be always very instructive; even grown-up people do not like that. The most interesting story for children is a funny story; and if one can put some little meaning into a comical story, that is the best thing one can do. They remember it, and at the same time the sense remains concealed in the story; and as they grow the sense begins to emerge, and one day they understand what it means.



There is a fable of a donkey and a camel. Once a donkey went to a camel and said, 'Camel Uncle, I would like very much to go grazing with you.' The camel said, 'Yes, I will come with you tomorrow.' And so they went into a field. It took a long time for the camel to feed himself, but the donkey fed himself very quickly. After the donkey had finished his dinner he said, 'Camel Uncle, I am so happy, first to have your friendship and then to be here in the field. I feel like singing and I would very much like you to dance.' The camel said, 'I have not yet finished my meal but you seem to be ready.' 'Well', said the donkey, 'if you are not ready I will try my voice'. And the donkey began to try his voice. And the farmer came with a stick in his hand, but the donkey jumped out of the way and the camel was beaten.

When next day the donkey went to invite Uncle Camel, the camel said, 'I am too ill; your way is different and my way is different. From today we will part.'

This story shows the sense of friendship between the one who is dignified and the one who has no sense of dignity.

If a young child asks a question about his origin, the answer one must give is: God. This question gives one an opening to sow the seed of the God-ideal in the heart of the child.

It is always good to tell children stories from the Bible or other sacred scriptures, but the person who puts them in a form that the child can understand must be very wise. If not, as the stories are, sometimes they are not proper stories to teach children; also the time of the Old Testament was a different time, and there are some stories which do not suit the present time. It is always a good thing for the guardian to make his own stories; to get the ideas out of different books and to put them into his own story and then give them to the children. Once a wise guardian was asked by a child, 'But is it a real story?' and he said, 'As a story it is real'.

It is learning while playing, for no one is so interested in stories as little children; and if one makes use of that interest for their benefit, one has the greatest opportunity to put wonderful ideas into their minds with the stories. In no other way will the child absorb ideals as it will do in the form of stories. The stories told in its early childhood will remain with it all through its life. It

will never forget them. Maybe that every year, as the child grows, that story will have another meaning; and so there will be a continual development of the ideal, which will become a great blessing in the life of the child.

### iii

The time between the ages of ten and twelve years may be called middle childhood. It is in this period that a child begins to be distinguished as a girl-child or a boy-child; and each must be given its particular direction, for a girl a girl's direction and for a boy a boy's direction. At home an education can be given which is not to be expected at school. Even if the same subjects were taught at school it would not be the same as what a child learns at home. Therefore even when the child is going to school there still remains a responsibility for the guardians to give it home education apart from its studies in the school.

For the intellectual development of the child it is of great importance that it becomes familiar with nature. It must not be done as a lesson; it must be done as a friendly talk to explain to the child about plants, trees, insects, birds, animals. And when it is given by the spoken word the effect is quite different from the reading of natural science or any other studies of nature that the child may make. It wakens its interest and it develops its knowledge, it deepens in it a feeling for nature; and it will later culminate in the wakening of the faculty of communicating with nature, which is the principal thing for every soul in his spiritual development.

A soul who is not close to nature is far away from what is called spirituality. In order to be spiritual one must communicate, and especially one must communicate with nature; one must feel nature. There is so much to be learned from plant life, from birds, animals, insects, that once a child begins to take an interest in that subject, everything becomes a symbolical expression of the inner truth. If the child is deeply interested in the knowledge of nature, that shows that it has taken the first step on the path of philosophical truth.

The next thing is to acquaint the child with the customs of the



country where it was born and has to live. It is the absence of this knowledge that makes people continue their old customs without knowing what they are and why they are; people go on sometimes for thousands of years following the same custom and yet not knowing the meaning of it. People in the East are very keen on their ancient customs, and very often they have followed those customs for more than a thousand years without knowing why and what is in them; they do it only because it is a custom. But it happens also in the West, where in some places there is a festival almost every day. It would be good for a child to know why such a custom exists, what is the good of it, what is the meaning of it, what we derive from it and what it suggests. It is interesting to celebrate a fête and to be gay and joyous; but one can make merry every day and yet achieve nothing. Besides life is an opportunity and every day and every hour of life is of the greatest importance; and if one allows so much of one's time to be given to customs of the country there is no end to it.

Every generation must take a step forward in evolution, and it can do it better by understanding life better. The guardians can help the child very much by making it understand life. And the best way of educating the child is not to give one's opinion about these customs, not to say directly that this is a good or a bad custom; only to explain the psychology of it and the meaning of the custom, and let the child see for itself if it is a custom worth following or better forgotten.

The third thing one can help the child to understand is something about the people of its country; what they were and what they are, their characteristics, their inclinations and their aspirations; and let the child imagine what it would like its world to be. This also gives it an opportunity of reconstruction as the world evolves.

And the fourth thing is to acquaint the child with its own family. Very often it happens that a child knows about China and Japan, and about Egypt and Persia, having read about them, and it does not know the name of its grandfather. If it knows something about its family, its genealogy, it will be able to control life better. Maybe there are things that the child will follow, that it will adopt for its betterment; and it may be that there are things

that it will correct in itself; maybe it wishes to repair some harm that was done before. In both cases the child will be able to manage its life better as it goes on.

If a soul is not interested in knowing about its own family, when it is grown-up it will not be interested in knowing about the source from whence it comes. Because this is the first point from which it can go further, until it reaches to that source, to that family, from whence it truly comes; and so in reality this is leading the child to God. For instance, a child is interested in knowing about its father, its mother, its grandfather, its grandmother, and perhaps about its great-grandfather; but where does it lead to? It only leads from the world of illusion to the source of reality. It gives the child an excuse to enquire further into life, and where it has come from; and in the end it will come to the conception of the source, which is the Source of all. And in this way it will find one day that the whole of humanity is a family, and that in the end we all meet in the same place where we have come from. When the child is grown-up it will change its whole attitude towards human beings; the narrowness will vanish, and a broad outlook will come to him of itself.

As the fifth aspect of knowledge one should give the child a little introduction to metaphysics, not much, just enough for it to know that there is a soul, that there is a mind, that there is a body; that there is a relation between the soul and the mind, and the mind and the body. For instance, if a child asks, 'What is the soul?' the shortest answer will be, 'Your innermost being, your invisible self, your self which is covered by your body. But that self is your real self, the body is only a covering.' Very often one little idea about a metaphysical truth goes into the heart of a child like a spark of fire which slowly blazes into a flame, a flame which will guide it through its whole life.

This is the period in the life of a child when the guardian must find out the trend of its mind, and which way it will take in life. This does not mean which profession it will take or what work it will do, only one should know if the child has a literary, a mechanical, an idealistic, or a religious trend of mind. And once the guardian has understood this it is better to give the child a suitable impression. For instance, when the guardian has found



out that the child has a literary trend of mind, and there is a great man lecturing in the city, it is good to take the child there. If it does not understand one word it does not matter. Let it be there, let it look at what is going on, and that impression will remain with the child for its whole life; and maybe that impression will help the child to become like the one it has seen.

At the age of ten, eleven, and twelve the child is most imitative, and if you know the bent of its mind, and if you give it an impression which it may imitate and which would be good for it to imitate, this means that you are setting it on the road which will lead to its destination. The best thing one can do in the life of a child is to give it good impressions, to show it wonderful personalities and wonderful works. Nothing in the world can help a child more than a good impression.

One might ask if one should develop only what is the child's special trend of mind. Should one not also show him another direction? Yes, but gently. And then one must see if the child has a tendency, an inclination, towards it. For instance, if a child shows more tendency to become a mechanic and if you urge it to become a violinist, in the end this will prove to be disastrous. The child will be neither a mechanic nor a violinist. It is better to watch the bent of the child's mind.

Regarding the cultivation of different qualities in the child, this can best be done with each child by teaching it to sing and play, and by giving it ear-training and rhythmic movements. If a child is inclined to sing it is best for it to sing; but if the child is not inclined to sing, but wants to play an instrument, it is best to give it an instrument to play. Which instrument is the best? This one cannot say. But an easy instrument should be given first; and afterwards, if the child wants another instrument which he likes better, then one should give it that instrument.

In the case of a girl it is better that she learns rhythmic movements; in the case of a boy it is better that he learns gymnastics. For a girl rhythmic movements serve the same purpose, and yet they do not hurt her girlish characteristics. For the boy gymnastics suffice, and these keep each in their own direction. The energy in a boy that makes him so restless and uncomfortable will be used in gymnastics, and that will bring about balance of mind.

Should every child be taught music? Yes; in the first place there is no child who is not inclined towards music; it is the grown-up who becomes disinclined towards music. There is an Arabian story that when God commanded the soul to enter the body of clay He had made, the first body of man, the soul refused to enter it. The soul said, 'I am free to move about in any sphere I like, and I have the limitless strength and power I derive from Thee; I do not want to enter into this body of clay. To me it looks like a prison.' Then God asked the angels to play on their harps; and the soul on hearing this music began to dance and went into ecstasy. It entered the body unknowingly and was caught in this prison.

Therefore no soul comes on earth without a feeling for music. It is only when souls have become dense after having come to the earth that they lose that feeling. But when someone has lost interest in music one should know that that person is not living; there is something that was living in that person that is now dead.

It is not necessary for every child to be brought up to be a musician, but elementary teaching of music is necessary for every child. It will help it in every walk of life. Whatever it may do a musical training will help it. And therefore musical training must not be considered as a branch or as one part of education but as the foundation for the child's whole life.

#### iv

The time between the ages of ten and twelve years is the period that finishes a cycle, the first cycle in the life of every soul. Mystics consider each cycle as twelve years. Therefore these last three years of the first cycle are of very great importance in the life of the child. During this particular period at the ages of ten, eleven, and twelve, what is taught is like the finishing touch given by an artist after having painted a picture; and after this another cycle begins.

The time of preparing children for the next cycle is a most important period. If the child by this time has not been taught, has not been corrected, has not been given that direction which it ought to have taken, then later on it will be difficult; for the



most important period has passed. The more guardians understand of their responsibility, the more they will realize that if things were not taught which should have been taught at that time they can never be taught later.

The appropriate direction must be given to the girls and to the boys. One cannot drive both with the same whip. For instance, a word of displeasure will touch the boy on the surface and the girl to the depth; and it is the same with a word of appreciation. Often with the boy it will go in at one ear and out at the other, whereas the girl will keep it with her perhaps for her whole life. Those who think that boys and girls can both be directed in the same way will find in the end that they made a great mistake. The psychology of the boy is quite different from the girl's, and for each a special method must be used in order to bring them up.

If the girl or the boy receives a word of admiration or of blame, it must be given in different terms and in different words; and one should be most lenient towards the girl, whereas it does not matter so much with the boy. Often the boy takes a punishment and after half an hour, or even before half an hour has passed, he forgets it; and often a girl remembers it for months and months; it affects her most deeply. Besides there are certain characteristics to be developed in the boy and certain characteristics to be developed in the girl; and you cannot call them virtues for both. For instance, courage in the boy, modesty in the girl; common sense in the boy, idealism in the girl; responsibility in the boy, duty in the girl; God-ideal in the boy, religion in the girl; also thought in the boy, consideration in the girl.

One may ask why it is necessary to develop the inherent qualities of boys and girls; why not pay attention first to their opposites? The reason is this, that any quality that is an inherent quality is born in a person because that quality will lead to the purpose of his life. For instance the lion is given the quality of the lion; that is the purpose, that is his destiny; and the deer is given the quality needed for the purpose of his life. But if the lion had the deer quality or the deer had the lion quality, neither would be properly equipped for living in the world. What the deer is shows in its own quality, what the lion is shows in its own

quality. One must not think it is not necessary for the other quality to come to the boy or girl; but what should be developed is the particular quality, and the other quality will come by itself. It does not mean that a boy must not have those qualities which have been said to belong to a girl. For instance, if the boy is without any ideal he is useless; but the ideal will come; in the girl, however, it must be planted, it must be developed.

It is the psychology of the boy and the girl which makes it necessary to give certain things to the boy and certain things to the girl; but as they develop they take each other's qualities; with development it comes naturally. Balance is best, whether in the boy or in the girl; and balance comes through opposite qualities. The work of the teacher is not to teach balance, the work of the teacher is to teach qualities; life will bring about balance by itself, as long as boys and girls are taught that particular quality which belongs to them.

The question arises how children should answer the different demands of life, such as helping at home, helping outside, seeing friends, seeing strangers. Children of ten, eleven, and twelve need not be given particular work to do at home, but at the same time they should be made acquainted with the duties of the household and with the work in outside life, so that as they grow up they may understand and appreciate the responsibility and the duties of their guardians.

With friends of the family children should have a respectful attitude, the same attitude they have towards their own guardians or parents. One day the Prophet heard his children calling a servant by his name, and the Prophet said, 'No, children, he is older than you. Call him uncle.' This ideal was taught from the beginning, in order that as they grew up they might attract more friends, instead of offending friends of the house. Also it shows a beautiful manner in the child to have a friendly outlook and a respectful attitude towards the friends of the family. And when children of that age meet strangers, the strangers can understand from the manner of the children what home, what family they belong to, what education, what training they have been given. If they are rude, thoughtless, inconsiderate, or ill-mannered, they represent their family in this way. Therefore it is the responsibility



and the duty of the guardian to make the children aware of these rules of everyday life.

The period between ten and twelve is the period when children must be taught to practise whatever work is given to them, whether it be music, painting, drawing, or anything else. This is the time when they must learn to concentrate upon that work, stick to that work, and not let their minds be disturbed by anything outside; because later on this faculty will prove to be the foundation of spiritual development.

And then comes a still more delicate question, and that is that in their food, in their fancies, in their clothes, they must not have too much their own way; because this is not the time when they should be thinking very much about clothes or about the food they eat or about anything like that; it is the time when they should be quite unaware of it. Whatever is given to them they should take gratefully, thankfully; the days of fancy and fantasy will come afterwards. And if care is not taken of that side of children's nature, it will develop disagreeably and later on it will take the form of a very undesirable spirit.

How can this be done? It should be done, not by correcting them nor by impressing rules upon them, but by making them see the pleasure of contentment; and the thought must be impressed upon them that this is the time when they must put their mind to work. By gentle counsel and friendly advice they will soon understand. A guardian once told a little girl who was very fond of looking in the mirror, 'Jinns can peep through the mirror, and you must look out for them; people who look in the mirror too many times will have to meet jinns'. And from that time that little child showed less and less of that tendency. One may ask if there is any harm in looking in the mirror. There is; looking in the mirror makes one self-conscious, and self-consciousness makes one nervous. And all the tragedy of life comes from self-consciousness when it culminates in self-pity.

It is a very delicate work to train the child without its realizing that it is being taught. Everything one teaches it must be in such a way that the child does not know that a certain rule or principle is imposed upon it; that is the way to work with it. In laughter, in smiles, in stories, in friendly conversation, things can be told to

children that they will always remember; but as soon as they are corrected and one imposes a certain principle upon them they begin to feel the burden of it.

It must be remembered that life is an opportunity, and this particular period of ten, eleven, and twelve years is a most wonderful opportunity. This is the period when children drink in and assimilate any knowledge, and that knowledge grows with them in their growth. Very often the knowledge of the various rules of life can be given to them in a very mild form by telling stories, because a story gives a wonderful picture of life and yet they do not feel the burden of the teaching. They are interested; and very often after the story children will even ask, 'What does it mean, what do we get from it?' And when that happens then one should know that one has the greatest opportunity of tuning the child's spirit to the knowledge and the consciousness to which one wishes to tune it.



## CHAPTER IV

# THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH

### i

THE age between thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen years is the time when childhood is ending, and it is the beginning of youth. On one side there is the urge of youth and on the other side childhood ending; it brings about an inner struggle in the child. The child is neither a youth nor a child, and therefore there is a struggle in its being. That is why some children appear to be very nervous at that time. This age is the period of Kemal, the period of inner conflict. And when the guardian is unaware of this inner conflict, he will find in the child a very troublesome element showing itself in many forms; but when the guardian understands that this time in the life of the child is a time of conflict, he will treat it differently. It is the time when the child must be handled most carefully. A child will show moments of passiveness and moments of activeness; at times the child will show presence of mind and at other times it will be absent-minded. The mind of the child is beginning to form at that time, and the foundation of the mind is being laid in that period.

In the period of Kemal three aspects of knowledge should be taught to the child: the knowledge of the land, of the water, and of the sky. The knowledge of the land is the knowledge of what is produced in the land, in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms. The knowledge of the water is of the creatures that live in the water, the dangers of the water, and the way that men travel and have travelled over the sea. The knowledge of the sky is about the stars and planets, the sun and the moon and the effect of wind and storm. The reason why this particular knowledge should be given at this time is that the mind is not yet definitely formed, and it should be based from the beginning on wide lines, in order that a wide building may be created on that foundation.

At that time, it is better to help the child, whether boy or girl,

to keep a passive rather than an active attitude, because it is the time of absorption and not the time of expression. By urging a passive attitude upon the child one will only make it uncomfortable; but by cultivating that attitude gently, without allowing the child to know it, one will prepare the soil of its mind for a better purpose. It is, however, a difficult problem. One can cultivate a passive attitude in the child by trying to attract its interest to one's words and one's actions.

It is not desirable to force the development of spiritual tendencies in early youth; but it is desirable to help to develop what little spiritual tendency there is.

Youth is the time for definite religious education. If that time is past, then a person is always shy of taking part in religion. However much attracted he may be to religion and to the religious ideal, he feels awkward and shy about it, and he does not come forward to take his part in it. One may ask if it is better to bring a child up first in one religion and to make it acquainted with other religions later on, or to teach it from the beginning that all religions are one. First the child must know one religion in order to know all religions. If it has not come to understand one religion it will not come to the understanding of all religions. Broadness is the result and not the beginning. If you make a person too broad in the beginning, in the end he will become narrow.

The culture of the mind has five different aspects. First, thought and imagination. Thought is one thing, and imagination is another. Very often people confuse these two words. Thinking is an automatic action of mind, there is no will-power behind it. Therefore the dream is an imagination; only it is called a dream because it is more concrete; when a person is asleep and the senses are closed there is nothing but the imagination before the mind. But in the case of imagination in the waking state there is on one side imagination and on the other side the action of the five senses, and then imagination plays a passive part.

In helping the child to cultivate thought and imagination one may also make a mistake. Once I visited a school of thought-culture. They had made a new system, and I went to see it. There were ten or twelve children standing, and the teacher said, 'Look,



what is there here?' There was nothing but a plain board before them. One child says, 'A lily.' The teacher says 'All right.' To another child he says, 'Look, what is here?' The other child looks and says, 'A red rose.' The teacher is satisfied. And to the third child he says, 'See, what is here?' The child says, 'It is a pink rose', and again the teacher is satisfied. And then he asks another child to tell what is there, and the child says, 'I do not see anything'. I thought to myself, 'He is the one who has some sense, for he did not tell a lie.'

Now, what good will it do to the children, who say whatever comes into their heads, but have seen nothing? It is only making them imaginative and after that, what? Only worse; and after that still worse. The fate of these ten or twelve children will be the worst fate. Imagine them learning for five or six years this kind of thought-culture, by which they allow their imagination to run freely and believe that they see what they have imagined with their eyes on the board! It can only lead to what might be called mediumistic culture.

The right way of helping the imagination of the child is to direct its attention to all that is beautiful, and then see what it would like to add to it to complete the beauty, be it the beauty of line, of colour, of notes, or of rhythm, be it the beauty of idea, beauty of action, or beauty of meaning. In this way the child's imagination could develop. If one asks the child, 'What would you do in this situation?' 'What would you like to do to make it complete?' 'What would you do to make it more beautiful?', in this way one helps the child to develop its faculty of imagination.

But then comes the question of how to develop a child's thought. The thought of a child cannot be developed by getting it to think on love, or on kindness, or goodness, or anything like that. As soon as the child is given a thought to hold on to it feels uncomfortable, uneasy, just as a mule would feel the burden on its back. The best way is to find out what it is thinking of and to strengthen that thought, if the thought is desirable.

For example, a child said to its guardian, 'I would like to have a magic wand. Where could I get it?' The guardian said, 'If you had a magic wand what would you do with it?' The child answered, 'I heard that if a person has a magic wand, he has only

to wave it and everything will come.' So the guardian said, 'What do you wish?' At first the child hesitated, because he felt very shy about telling his wish, but in the end he expressed his wish. As soon as the guardian knew he said, 'You do not need a magic wand; the wish itself is a power if you can think about it.' The child said, 'I always think about it.' The guardian said, 'Think about it still more.' It is not giving a child a new thought, but just strengthening its thought. From that moment the child who was looking for a magic wand thought the magic wand was in itself; that if it thought about the magic wand it would get what it wanted.

A child always has a good memory, but it acts only in things it is interested in. Where the child has no interest it will not remember. It does not mean that it cannot remember, but that it will not remember. It is not a mistake of the child's memory, but it is the mistake of those who force upon its memory something that will not stay there. And very often the greatest mistake of school-teachers is that they force upon the mind of the child something in which it is not interested, that it does not want to look at, or think about. How cruel it is that in order that the child should pass an examination, its mind should be forced and urged to hold an idea which it is not capable of holding! The best way of developing a child's memory is to give it something it remembers, likes, and is interested in, and to ask the child about it, to take an interest in it oneself and to keep that flame burning.

Many children do not like the study of mathematics. If it is not their temperament, if it is not in their nature they will not like it. Mathematics are easy for those who have that temperament, who are born with that tendency; but there is another tendency which is quite opposite to figures, to mathematics.

When a child is interested, for instance, in poetry, and yet cannot remember it, this shows that it has no concentration; but that will improve by giving the child a greater interest in poetry, and encouraging it to read it more and to recite it, and by showing appreciation of what it does. Very often a guardian is interested in telling a story to a child, but is not interested in hearing that story from the child. But this is a great training if one can do it; if having told a story to the child one asks it to tell the story again



after three months, and then sees how its memory works. In this way memory can be developed.

Some children have the reasoning faculty developed in them and others have not. But this is a faculty upon which the future of the child depends, upon which its whole life depends. Where the reasoning faculty is not developed there is always a danger for its life. It can be easily cultivated in the child by asking questions for and against everything: if it must be, why it must be; and if it must not be, why it must not be; and sometimes quite the contrary question. When a child says, 'This is right', it must be asked why it is right; if the child says, 'This is wrong', it must be asked why it is wrong. The guardian must take the same attitude that the child has, always asking why, instead of letting the child ask why. The guardian must become a child and ask why of everything; and in this way reasoning is developed. Any child that shows the quality of reasoning has the promise of a wonderful future before it.

It is not always advisable to play with children's emotions. Often it might be a pleasure to the guardian to see how the child is affected by a certain thought, by a certain word. But by doing this one weakens that faculty. The best thing is to keep the feeling of the child untouched, in order that this deepest faculty may grow still deeper and stronger, so that when the child comes to the age when its emotion must show itself, it is perfected.

In the culture of mind the most important problem is the thought of 'I'; and this thought develops very strongly in a child of thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen. It is very keen about saying *I* and *my*. And if this faculty is softened at that particular period in childhood, while the child is growing up, it will be much better. This faculty shows itself especially when the child is cross, when it is in a temper, when it wants to defend itself, and when it wants to express, 'This I own, this is mine, and nobody else must touch it, and nobody else must take it.' At such times it must be softened. At thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen the child is more thoughtful, and if at times of anger there is an effort made by the guardians to help it to look at things rightly and from their point of view, it is easier at this time than it was in its early childhood.

## ii

Youth is divided into three parts. Thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen years are early youth; sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen, the middle part of youth; nineteen, twenty and twenty-one, complete youth.

There is a tendency on the part of guardians to encourage the development of a youth in whatever direction he chooses to take. But to encourage a youth in any direction is like urging on a very energetic horse which is already running fast. What a youth needs most is not encouragement; what he needs most is balance. The tendency of a youth, both in the right direction and the wrong direction, may prove unsatisfactory in the end if his action is not evenly balanced.

There are two important things to be considered by guardians in the development of the youth. One is that very often guardians think this is the same child who used to be a baby and a little child running about, and they go on treating the youth in the same way as they have done before. They underestimate his comprehension, his maturity of mind, the development of his spirit; and in this way very often they delude themselves. And then there are others who take the opposite course. When the youth begins to say things that show a greater intelligence, they believe that they can tell him anything and everything, without waiting for the appropriate time to mention a certain thing, a certain idea. And therefore mistakes may be made both by considering a youth to be an experienced person, and also by considering him to be still a child that does not know anything.

It is mostly the education of the home, if it is not given properly, that spoils a youth. The time of youth is a time of nervousness, of restlessness, and of agitation. If the education given at home antagonizes the youth, he is spoiled for ever. If the good opinion that he had before of his guardians is changed, then youth is the time when guardian and child become estranged; youth builds a wall between the guardian and the growing child. The growing child finds consolation with friends, with neighbours, with acquaintances, who sometimes take advantage by



saying, 'Yes, you are right. Your people at home do not understand you. It is a great pity, it is a shame'; and that great opportunity of making the link with the youth more strong is lost by the guardians who do not understand this situation properly. A child who shows friendship, response, and the feeling of comradeship with the guardian during his youth, will be a great friend all his life.

It is like training a horse. There is a certain time when a horse learns to obey, but if at that time the trainer makes a mistake, that mistake remains for ever in the horse. And if at the time of maturity of its mind, when the horse is beginning to respond to the trainer, it is given a right direction, then all through life that horse works rightly.

Some guardians show their helplessness in not being able to control a youth, and criticize the youth who is not under their control and does not listen to them; they think it is hopeless, that the youth is spoiled, and that he is gone out of their hands. They help the child very little, because they are only conscious of his bad points; and by showing their dissatisfaction they do not help the youth, they spoil him. The guardians need not be severe with the youth, they need not be too firm, nor too pessimistic in regard to his advancement. The more they trust him and the more they have confidence in themselves, the more they are able to help the child. Nothing helps more than trusting in the good points of the youth, appreciating them, and encouraging him in that direction.

There are, however, others who out of their love and sympathy spoil the youth. They pour out so much love and sympathy that it blinds them in what they are doing. Also the child is not meant to be for ever with the guardians. What will happen when the guardian is not there and the child has to face the world? Everybody will not spoil him, everybody will not give sympathy; and then the life of the child in the world will become wretched. Often children who happen to be the only child of their parents or in the family, and who are much cared for and receive much sympathy and love, become so spoiled that the very sympathy and love that has been given them proves to be a bitter pill. They never receive it again in life, and all through life they suffer for it.

It is wiser for the guardians to make a point of decreasing the strong hold that they had on a child as it grows to become a youth. But how can they decrease it? Just as a rider makes the rein looser and looser, but gradually. Those who do not understand this have kept it firm in childhood, and then in youth have let it go. But it must be loosened gradually, and it must be loosened on the lines of the child's development. At every step forward in development of personality, of humanity, one must trust the youth and give that much more freedom of thought and action, yet holding the rein and keeping it firm, being conscious of the responsibility of the guardians to help the youth through that most critical period.

The best way of helping the youth is to give him desirable impressions of conditions, of situations, of personalities, and in this way, by giving him impressions, to let the child learn by himself without being taught in words.

There is a story of a father who saw that his young son had a tendency to certain vices. He told him often to keep away from them but the boy would not listen. He did everything in his power; in the end, when he was dying, he called his son and said, 'Now I will never tell you any more not to do things that you have always liked to do. But will you remember the last words of your father, that whenever you want to gamble you must gamble with the greatest gamblers, and whenever you feel like drinking you must drink with great drunkards.' The son thought these last words more desirable than anything he had heard from his father before. And when he went to gamble he began to ask people, 'Who are the great gamblers in the city?' They said, 'Great gamblers are not to be found in gambling houses. You must go and look for them outside the city.' So when he had heard their names he went there. He found that they were playing with pebbles, because they had lost all the money they had. And he said, 'I have heard a great deal about you people, and here you are playing with pebbles. I thought you would be playing for millions of pounds!' They said, 'No, we played for millions, and now we are playing for pebbles. Come along, if you wish to play with us. We have nothing more left.'

He got a lesson from this and he said, 'Nothing doing in this

128763.



direction. Now I must go somewhere else to find great drunkards.' And the people in the city gave him two or three names of well-known drunkards and he went there. He did not find any bottles, any drink, nor anything. And he said to them, 'I have heard your names. Everybody talks about you; you are great drunkards. But there are no bottles; what are you drinking?' They said, 'All the money we had was spent in drinking. No money is left. We have now some snakes. When we want to drink we let the snakes bite us; that gives us a kind of intoxication. If you like we will bring a snake for you.' And he ran away and never came near them again. That gave him another lesson.

The education of youth depends mostly upon impressions. Sometimes you may make a youth read books and that will not help; and sometimes you may tell the youth fifty times or a hundred times, 'This is right', 'This is not right', 'This is not good', and he will never listen. But once you show him the phenomena, the example of what you are saying, and let the youth see with his own eyes what are the effects of different causes, then the teaching is given in an objective way; and in this manner wise guardians educate a youth.





THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN  
THE TRAINING OF YOUTH





## THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

### i

ON THE education of children depends the future of nations. To consider the education of children is to prepare for future generations. The heart of the child is like a photographic plate without any impressions on it, ready to reflect all that it is exposed to. All the good qualities which help to fulfil the purpose of life are the natural inheritance that every soul brings to the earth; and almost all the bad traits that mankind shows in its nature are as a rule acquired after birth. This shows that goodness is natural and badness unnatural. Therefore the child who has not yet had the opportunity of acquiring bad traits in life can, if helped, develop the natural goodness that is in its soul.

Education is not necessarily a qualification for making one's life successful, nor for safeguarding one's own interests; it is really a qualification for a fuller life, a life of thought for oneself and of consideration for others. Education is that which gradually expands in its length and breadth, horizontally and perpendicularly. We may further explain this as being the knowledge of oneself and of one's surroundings; the knowledge of others, both those who are known to us and those who are unknown and away; the knowledge of the conditions of human nature and of life's demands; and the knowledge of cause and effect, which leads in the end to the knowledge of the world within and without.

No doubt it is difficult to think of vast knowledge of life in connection with a child, but we must remember that as a rule the grown-ups underestimate the capacity of a child's mind, which is very often more eager to understand and more capable of comprehension than that of a grown-up person. Although you cannot start with a deep subject at the beginning of a child's education, you can always keep before you the large design you have in view and wish to reach.

The reason why the earliest remembrances of childhood have

such a peculiarly vivid significance, is that we repeat after coming to the earth the same process through which the soul has passed. As the child grows it loses its innocence, so that it seems removed from the world of the angels. Infancy is still expressive of the angelic sphere; childhood expresses the sphere of the jinns; youth is the expression of the human world. And when one goes on one comes closer again to the higher spheres.

The child is more open to perceive, as its mind is free from worries and the excitement of life. The child is more willing to believe, for its mind is free from any pre-conceived idea. The child can look at things rightly, because its mind is not yet fixed on strong likes and dislikes. The child has already an inclination towards friendship, for animosity is unknown to it; and therefore the moral which should be the central theme of education, and which from beginning to end teaches the lesson of friendship, has full scope in the heart of a child.

The great fault of modern education has been that, with all its advanced methods of training children, it has missed what is most important: namely the lesson of unselfishness. Man thinks that an unselfish person is incapable of guarding his own interests in life; but however much it may appear so it is not so in reality. A selfish person is a disappointment to others, and in the end a disadvantage to himself. Mankind is interdependent, and the happiness of each depends upon the happiness of all, and it is this lesson that humanity has to learn today as the first and the last lesson.

Music is the basis of the whole of creation. In reality the whole of creation is music, and what we call music is simply a miniature of the original music, which is creation itself, expressed in tone and rhythm. The Hindus call tone, or sound, *Nada Brahma*, which means Sound-Creator. No scientist can deny the truth that the entire creation is movement. The nature of movement is expressed in tone and rhythm. There is no movement which is not also a sound, although it may not be audible to the human ear, and there is no movement without rhythm; for there cannot be a movement unless it marks two, just as no straight line can be without two ends. With every movement one counts its first activity as one and the next as two. As the conductor's baton



marks time for the orchestra: one-two, one-two, so one can mark the movement of every activity.

The whole of nature, in the change of seasons and of night and day, expresses rhythm; and the entire cosmic system shows in its working the law of rhythm. The ever-moving sea and the tides are examples of nature's rhythm. The entire universe being created on these two principles, the greatest appeal that can be made to a living creature is by means of tone and rhythm. The whole mechanism of man's body and the pulsation of his heart, all follow rhythm; this proves that every activity of life is an expression of tone and rhythm. Tone and rhythm constitute music; therefore music should be the principal means of perfecting the education of a child.

The infant begins its first activity in life by making a noise, trying to speak or moving its hands and legs to a certain rhythm. If the same faculty which every infant shows naturally is taken as the basis of his education, one can educate even an infant. The education given at the earliest age is invaluable to the child, for as the child grows, it acquires certain habits by itself; and once it has become fixed in its way of looking at things and thinking and behaving, these habits are hard to change. It is just like letting the rainwater make its own way instead of digging a canal to take the water to the farm or garden. In this way a child's tendency to learn and to act can be used to the best advantage, if the parents only know how. The Indians say that the mother is the first Guru; this should be realized by all parents. Education begins at home, and it is this first education which is the foundation of all that a child may learn in the future.

Health depends upon the music of one's life. When the mechanism of the body is regular in its rhythm and true in its tone, that is what is called health; and it is irregularity of rhythm and dissonance of tone which is called illness, and which physicians examine by counting the pulse, the beating of the heart, and by sounding the back and listening to the tone. They do these things in their capacity as physicians, not as musicians whose ears are trained to test the rhythm and tone.

The seer, the deep thinker, the knower of human nature, acts also as a musician by finding in people's actions their tone and

rhythm. He notices in an untimely action, caused by ignorance or impatience, the irregularity of the rhythm; and in a word or action that has a harder or softer effect than it should have he sees the false tone, the false note. He also feels consonant or dissonant chords. When two people meet the dissonant chord of their evolution keeps them distant from one another in thought, although they may be sitting near together; and often a third person comes who either harmonizes the dissonant chord or produces disharmony in the consonant chord.

This shows that the whole of life is music. Wagner said, 'Who knows sound knows all things.' If music could be the foundation of the training of children, every life would be built on a good foundation. Life is rhythm and life is tone; and so is music. When a child learns music it learns the divine language; whatever be its work later in life if the child has intuition it will express in some way or other what has been the foundation of its character. It is not necessary for every child to be trained as a musician, for many musicians are not an ideal example to humanity, although in the East there was a time when kings chose musicians to be their companions. It was not that they enjoyed only their music, but also what was expressed in their lives, in their feelings, thought, manner, and action as an outcome of their constant contemplation of music. Also in the Western world the company of true musicians has always been an attraction.

Man is the fruit of the whole of creation, the source of which is absolute beauty. The purpose of creation is beauty. Nature in all its various aspects develops towards beauty, and therefore it is plain that the purpose of life is to evolve towards beauty. In giving education to children the first consideration should be that the seeds of beauty are sown in their hearts. When the plant grows it must be tenderly reared. The thriving of the plant is to the credit of the gardener; so the children's development is in the first instance to the credit of their parents.

The parents must themselves learn to be examples for their children. No theory has influence without practice. It is natural that parents, however taken up by the wickedness or folly of life, should wish their children to be different and better than themselves. But it is difficult; the child is impressionable and it develops



that impression which it first received. Once the child sees in its parents a tendency towards drink or any other form of degeneration, it takes it for granted as it grows up that it must be the right or natural thing; for it says, 'If these things were not right my parents would not have done them'. In life the wrong thing attracts quickly, though the seeking of the soul is for what is right.

Parents are often anxious to collect wealth or property for their children; but there cannot be a greater wealth nor a better property than the impression they have left behind on the hearts of their children; the love and kindness they have spread in their circle of life multiplies in time, like the interest in the bank, and comes to the help of their children when they grow up in the form of love, kindness, and goodness from all sides.

The first education a child needs is to harmonize its thought, speech, and action. All things external have their reaction in one's inner life, and the inner has its reaction on the exterior. Therefore some knowledge of tone and rhythm is essential at the beginning of the child's education. A child should be taught the elements of music with regard to the pitch in which it should get in touch with its friends, with strangers, with its parents, while playing or at table; in every varying condition it should feel that the pitch is different. The child should be taught how to make its choice of words when speaking to different people, to strangers, to its friends, to its parents, to the servants in the house; making the voice softer or louder must be done with understanding.

The child is most energetic when it is growing, and every action, sitting, standing, walking, or running, every movement it makes, should be corrected and directed towards harmony and beauty. For the nature of life is intoxicating, and every action deepens the intoxication of life in a child, who is still ignorant of the outcome of every action; it knows little of the consequences and is only interested in the action. By nature a child is more enthusiastic and excitable than a grown-up person, and if its actions are not corrected or controlled it will mostly speak and act without consideration of harmony and beauty; for the nature of the child is like water which runs downwards and it needs a fountain to raise it upwards. Education is that fountain.

## ii

A child should be taught to speak and act according to the conditions prevailing at the moment: laughter at the time of laughter, seriousness at the moment when seriousness is required of it. In everything it does it must consider the conditions; it must watch for the opportunity to say and do the things it wishes. For instance if a child makes a noise when the parents are at work or when friends are visiting them, if a child brings its complaints to its parents when it ought to be silent, if it cries or laughs at the wrong moment, it commits a fault against the law of rhythm. Rhythm is the consideration of time and condition, and this is most necessary. It is a great pity that at this present time, when the cry for freedom seems to be so dominant, people often think, 'Why should not the children have their freedom?' But it must be understood that it is not the path of freedom which leads to the goal of freedom. Liberty is not an ideal to begin life with, it is a stage of perfect freedom which must be kept in view in order to arrive at the desired end. Narrow is the way and strait is the gate, says the Bible of the road leading to the goal of freedom.

Next, a child must be taught to understand the beauty of word and action; which action is agreeable to itself and to others, and which is disagreeable; what word is pleasing and what word is displeasing. This is the true sight-reading and ear-training a child needs. It should be taught to sense its words and the words of others; whether they are graceful or devoid of grace. It must be able to recognize what action is beautiful, which manner is graceful; it must know and feel when its movements or manners are not up to the mark. In short it should be educated to be its own judge and to dislike what is ungraceful in itself; yet it should tolerate the lack of beautiful manner in others by realizing that it is itself subject to errors, and that annoyance on its part would in itself be bad manners.

If the child does not show interest in beauty it is only because something is closed in it. In every soul, however wicked it might seem, however stupid it might seem, beauty is hidden; and it is



trust and confidence that will help us to draw out this beauty. However, the difficulty for everyone is to have patience. The lack of beauty in some people strikes us so hard that we lose patience because of it. In doing so we encourage them to become still worse; but if we could have the patience to endure and trust them, we could dig that beauty out; and some day we will, by the Fatherhood of God.

By trusting in the goodness of every person we will develop that beauty in ourselves. We do not, however, develop that beauty while thinking, 'I have it, but the other one has not!' but by forgetting ourselves and realizing that another person has got beauty in him although we do not always see it. And it is a weakness to turn our back upon anyone, child or grown-up, who seems to be lacking in the beauty that we expect. By opening ourselves to beauty we shall find it coming to life.

Consideration is the greatest of all virtues, for in consideration all virtues are born. Veneration for God, courtesy towards others, respect for those who deserve it, kindness to those who are weak and feeble, sympathy with those who need it, all these come from consideration.

All complaints that are made by friend about friend; or in the relations between husband and wife, master and servant, or between partners in business, show want of consideration. Everything man does which is called wrong, evil, or sin, is nothing but inconsiderateness. Consideration is a faculty which it is most necessary to develop in the child from the beginning; for once it has become inconsiderate, it is difficult to give it the sense of consideration. Consideration cannot be taught; it must come by itself; but the duty of the parents is to help it to rise in the child. They can very well accomplish this in a pleasant manner, without becoming a bore to the innocent mind of the child, by showing it where consideration is needed in different situations of life.

It is easy to accuse a child of inconsiderateness, but that does not always profit it. On the contrary, the child will often become annoyed at such accusations and hardened in its faults, defending its actions against the accusations of others, which is a natural human tendency. The way of the wise is to show appreciation whenever the child shows consideration, and to make it

conscious of that virtue, so that it may be able to enjoy its beauty. This develops in the child a taste for virtue; it feels happy to act rightly, instead of always being forced to do so. It is on strength of mind that the entire life of the child depends, and strength of mind can be developed in the child by making it self-confident in all it thinks, says, or does; it must get to know something instead of being forced to believe it. Faith, which is taught as the most important lesson in many religions, does not necessarily mean faith in what another person says, thinks, or does, but in what one says, thinks, or does oneself. True faith is self-confidence. Every effort should be made to help the child to have confidence in itself. This can be done by removing from its nature confusion, indecision, and doubt, for these are the cause of all failure in life. Self-confidence and single-mindedness are the key to all success. The child should be encouraged to think or act not only because it is taught to do so, but because it knows already that it is right to think, speak, or act in a certain way; otherwise it will only be a machine which works without knowledge of the purpose or result of the work. The whole tragedy of life is that so many minds work mechanically like machines; only rarely some few act with knowledge, certainty, and self-confidence.

The child's mind is naturally more active than a grown-up person's, for two reasons. Firstly, the child's mind is growing with great energy, which makes it active during its growth. Furthermore, energy is active in its rise and loses power in its descent; it is for this reason that the child is restless in its thought and action. One child in the room can make one feel there are a hundred children. The child is never still, it delights in occupying its mental and physical energy in some way or other all the time.

It must be remembered that no time in man's life is so productive of action, both mental and physical, as childhood; but usually it happens that this most important period of the life of man is wasted in play which mostly brings no result. If this activity of mind and body which is exerted in play were used in educating the child without in the least straining its mind or body, it would be of great value in its life. But what we generally find in the world is quite the contrary. People say that early



childhood is the time for a child to play. No doubt this is true; but it must be remembered that in every action, work or play, one spends a certain amount of energy; the difference is that work is what one is obliged to do and play what one does for one's pleasure.

But it is altogether a wrong principle, for children as well as for grown-ups, to divide work and play thus. Play should be useful and should be work at the same time; and work should be made like play, in order that it may not be a tedious task but a pleasure in life; if this idea were worked out well it would solve a great many labour problems which disturb the peace and order of humanity so much today.

It can best be done by teaching children to play and work at the same time, so that when they are grown-up work and play will continue to be the same. All that one does with pleasure is done well and produces a good effect. Doing depends upon the attitude of mind. When the mind is not in a good state, whatever be the work, however interesting, it will not be well done. To bring about peace and order in the world it is very necessary that all work should be made pleasant, and that all pleasure should be turned into work, so that in taking pleasure no work is lost and there is pleasure in working. The central theme in the education of children should be the occupying of every moment of their life in doing quite willingly something which is pleasurable and at the same time useful. Life is a great opportunity, and no moment of life should be lost.

The great fault of the modern system of education is that it only qualifies a man to obtain what he desires in life; and he tries to obtain this by every means, right or wrong, often with no regard for what losses or pain he causes others. The consequence of this is that life has become full of competition in trade, in the professions, and in the State. In order that one may gain another must surely lose. In this way the shadow changes its position from morning to evening; in the end the shadow must prove to be only a shadow, and one realizes it matters little which direction the shadow takes.

A child should begin to learn rivalry in goodness and competition in charity. Life is the outcome of reciprocity and reciprocity

can be created by changing the attitude from a selfish to an unselfish one. The only hope of creating in the future a better spirit in the world, is to teach the ideal of unselfishness to the children, making this the spirit of the coming world.

The education of children should be considered from five different points of view: physical, mental, moral, social, and spiritual. If one side is developed and not the other sides, naturally the child will show some lack in its education.

There ought to be a standard of education for everyone in the country, rich or poor. It is the principal thing necessary for the order and peace of the community and the nation. No one, however poor his circumstances, should be deprived of education in his childhood, which is the only opportunity in life for a soul to acquire knowledge. It should be considered that every child is the child of the community. The idea that only the rich can afford to educate their children will not prove satisfactory in this epoch, for it shows the selfishness and negligence of one part of the community towards the other part. The neglected part must sooner or later rebel against it, as soon as they realize that they have been kept back by those with means, so that they cannot receive education and be prosperous in their lives. It is this revolt which has brought about a feeling of bitterness and indignation in the people; and this feeling will increase, to the great disadvantage of society, if not sufficient attention is given to public education.

The State is certainly responsible for the education of the people. It should be arranged that one and the same education is given to rich and poor alike in a course which consists of the five above-mentioned aspects of knowledge. Once that course is finished, then the children may take up any profession they like. If they want further education they may receive it from their private means if they can afford it, but the necessary education must be given to every child of the community. The course of education can certainly be compressed and made into a course of general education; the child should not only be taught to read and write but to have an all-round idea of life and how it can best be lived.



## iii

Physical education can be given, even from infancy, with the help of music. An infant should be made to move its hands and feet up and down, and as it grows it should be taught to do it rhythmically. When a child grows up, when it can dance and play different games, gymnastics should be taught, in such a way that the child may benefit by them but that they do not become a tedious work but a recreation.

Regularity is desirable in the building up of the personality of a child. It is habit which forms nature, but nature has no habit. It is always beneficial for a child to eat when hungry, to rest when tired. In this way the child makes its own nature instead of becoming subject to habits. Pure and nourishing food is necessary for a child while it grows. It needs all kinds of food to nourish its growth; also a child must have good long hours of sleep according to the needs of each child. At the same time a certain part of the day must be kept for the child to rest, and it must be done in such a manner that the child, whose natural tendency is to be active, may gladly take this rest. This can be done by telling it a story or giving it some work of art to look at, or by letting the child hear some music.

It is a popular belief that the childhood diseases most children go through are more or less inevitable. This is not so; they are caused by the artificiality of life.

A great deal of excitement, crying or laughing naturally upsets the rhythm of a child's body and mind. It is always wise to give the child, for its equilibrium, scope for action and reaction in everything it does. If a child is afraid of something, the best way to help it is to make it acquainted with the thing it is afraid of.

It is not advisable that the child should be taught always in the house, nor always at school. The study should be divided, partly indoors and partly outdoors. The teaching given to a child indoors should be different from the study given out of doors. The outdoor study should concern all that the child sees; one can then include the practice or the experience of what it has learned

indoors. In short, a child's health must be considered as part of its education; study and health go together.

Together with physical culture, mental training is very necessary for a child. There are two things which ought to be remembered: one is to develop the mental power of the child, the other to give fineness to a child's mentality. Very often the development in a certain direction hinders the progress in some other direction. In the first place, to make its mentality strong, the child should be taught to concentrate its mind through study and play. It should be given some enterprise which takes most of its attention in one direction, making the child single-minded.

The child must be kept from excitement or passion of any kind, for it is tranquillity of mind which gives a child strength, balance, self-control, self-confidence, and determination. It also strengthens the child's mentality, and it is certainly on the strength of the mentality that success in life chiefly depends. But strong mentality does not suffice for every purpose of life; besides strength, fineness is necessary. In order to develop this fineness in a child, every help must be given to sharpen its wits. Wit needs an opportunity to develop and that opportunity can be given by training a child to grasp things. A certain amount of encouragement can also be given to stimulate its wits. A child must be helped to perceive keenly what time is suitable for a certain action, what it can say or do at one time and what it should not say and do at another time. Great care should be taken in teaching good manners to a child, so that in time it may become natural to show in its manner the beauty hidden in its soul. Fine mentality can be seen in keen perception, in love of subtlety, and in the gracefulness and refinement of manner which complete mental culture.

Moral education depends upon three things: the right direction of love, a keen sense of harmony, and the proper understanding of beauty. The child should be taught to make the right use of its emotional and sentimental faculties; and the right use is to show its charity of heart in generous actions, and first to its immediate surroundings. The child must learn that love means sacrifice; also it must know that love is best expressed in service of any kind; that emotion is best used in kind action, and sentiment in creating



harmony. A child must understand that love should be shown by being considerate, and its sentiment must teach it respect and consideration for others.

A child is a growing plant and it needs not only bodily nourishment, but also the nourishment of the heart; and that is best taught by loving the child and by reciprocating its love. And yet it must be taught balance, to keep its emotion within certain bounds and limitations. A child must be taught the use of love through the expression of sweetness in its thought, speech, and action. A wrongly given love spoils the child by making it rude, vain, and indifferent. One must not show all one's love to one's children, especially not in any emotional form. One must have a certain amount of reserve in one's own self, for the child to take example by and to follow. An excessive amount of reserve may imply want of love, which is fruitless at times; a balance of love and reserve in dealing with a child is the right thing.

It is very important to cultivate the spirit of generosity in the child's heart. Generosity does not necessarily mean extravagance or lack of consideration for things one possesses. The real spirit of generosity is best expressed in charity of heart. Obeying, respecting, serving, learning, responding, all this comes from charity of heart, and it grows by developing generosity of nature.

One must protect the child against the inclination to be led astray by others, for a generous child is often subject to misleading influences. Also it must be kept from being generous with other people's things, even with the possessions of its own parents. Generosity on the part of a child is only the opening of the heart. When the heart of a child is closed, the child is deprived of expression; and when once it has started in this way its entire life develops on the same lines. It is the generosity of the heart which is the mystery of genius, for to give expression to art or science, poetry or music, the heart must be opened first; and this can only be accomplished by the generosity of the heart. Tolerance, forgiveness, endurance, fortitude, are all the outcome of this virtue.

A friendly spirit is the natural spirit of the soul. Nothing in the child should be encouraged which forms an obstacle to its friendly

tendency; but it is the responsibility of the parents to watch with whom the child wants to be friends, and to keep the child always in the company of desirable children. The guardian must not make the child feel that it is deprived of the choice of its friends, but it should be guided in order to keep it among desirable friends.

The freedom of the child must always be considered; it should never be forced but only guided gently. One should produce in a child the desire to choose as its friends those whom it feels to be congenial. As soon as the liberty of a child is interfered with, the child begins to feel itself a captive and the lantern of its conscience becomes dim. Therefore the duty of the parents is to guide the child constantly, yet freeing it gradually to make a choice in everything in life. Parents who do not understand this and do not attach sufficient importance to it, very often cause the child to go astray while trying to guide it.

A child should learn to recognize its relation and duty to all those around it. One should let it know what is expected of it by its father, mother, brothers, and sisters; for the recognition of relationship is the sign of human character which is not seen among animals. A son who has not been a good son to his mother will not be a good husband to his wife, for he has missed his first chance of developing thoughtfulness and the love quality. But as the child grows it must be led to have some idea of the further relationship between human beings. For the world is a family, and the right attitude of a young soul must be to see in every man his brother and in every woman his sister; he must look on aged people as he would on his father or mother.

The betterment of the world mostly depends upon the development of the coming generation. The ideal of human brotherhood should be taught at home; this does not mean that the child must recognize human brotherhood before recognizing the relationship with his own brothers and sisters; but the relationship at home must be the first lesson in human brotherhood which the child may reach by realizing the brotherhood of the nation, of the race, and then of the world. It is a fault when a person does not progress in the path of brotherhood. The child should be taught to picture first its own town as a family, then its nation as



a family, and then the entire continent as a family, in order to arrive at the idea that the whole world is a family.

A child should know the moral of give and take; it must know that it should give to others what it wishes to receive from them. The great fault of humanity today is that everyone seeks to get the better of others, by which one is often caught in one's own net. Fair dealing in business and in a profession and the honouring of one's word are most necessary today. It is the spirit of brotherhood which will solve the problems of business and professions, as of education and politics, which are so difficult to solve at present owing to the absence of brotherly feeling.

The education of the younger generation needs the spiritual ideal more than anything else. Since the world has become so materialistic man has almost lost sight of the main object of life, which is the spiritual ideal. Spiritual ideal does not mean that children should necessarily be attached to any particular faith, or that any particular Church should be forced upon them. What is needed is simply to give some ideal to the child to look forward to, some high ideal, yet one which the child's mind can conceive. The divine ideal has been given to mankind for spiritual attainment in all periods of the world's history, and humanity will never outgrow that ideal.

Whatever be the stage of human progress, the divine ideal will be the only ideal which will help both old and young to steer their way through the sea of life. It is the loss of divine ideal which causes the breakdown in the life of individuals and of humanity in general; the cause of paralysis in modern progress is no other than the loss of divine ideal. Man, revolting against existing religion or religious authority, has naturally forgotten the divine ideal, which is really the one yearning of his soul. A time has come when man has neither his ancestors' religion nor a religion of his own.

A child must learn that there is some ideal; that towards that ideal the whole of humanity is unconsciously or consciously progressing. The child must know that it is responsible for all it does, not only to its fellow-men, but to someone who watches it constantly and from whom nothing can be hidden; that however much justice may seem to be suffering in the world, there is

somewhere the balance of justice which in time must balance things; and that death is only a bridge by which the soul passes from one sphere to another. The child which respects age, which is considerate for the elderly in its surroundings, and which imagines them to be an ideal that is to be followed, shows it has religion in itself.

Spiritual ideal is the natural inclination of every soul. It needs no great effort to guide a child towards spirituality; it is more difficult to keep a child from it, which many parents do today who are anxious about their child being drawn towards spiritual ideals. No doubt, too much religion is not good for a child; it makes the child fixed in its ideas, and takes away the liquidity that every soul naturally possesses. Giving the child ideas of spirits or ghosts or of heaven and hell is not desirable. The child's imagination should be kept within the range of its reasoning, and yet reason must not be made an obstacle in the way of the child's imagination. For very often the child's imagination goes further than that of its parents, and it would be cruel to hinder it by limiting the child to one's own religious and material ideas. The principal thing in spirituality is genuineness of life; in other words: sincerity. The child must be taught to say what it means. If it is by nature artistic in its expression, which is often seen in exceptionally intelligent children, then the child must be kept close to reality, in order that it may not be led astray by the art of its intelligent expression.

Before the child goes to bed, it should be taught, in some form or other, to think gratefully of the One from whom all goodness comes and to whom all is known. The child may also be taught to wish good to all in the name of the One who has created all. What a child should wish for its parents or for others is good health, long life, right guidance from above, prosperity, success, happiness, and love.



## THE TRAINING OF YOUTH

### i

YOUTH for every soul is the season of blossoming, and it can be divided into three stages: early youth, the middle part of youth, and the last stage of youth.

There is great difficulty in the training of youth, because in youth a child becomes less receptive. The child is passive and therefore easy to guide, but youth is the time of rising energy, both physical and mental; therefore youth is expressive, and what is expressive cannot be receptive at the same time. Parents make a great mistake when they continue the same method with a youth which they applied in his childhood. There is the time of ploughing, there is the time of sowing, and there is the time of reaping the harvest; it is not all done at the same time.

In youth a child is most susceptible to influences, and at the same time most repellent of influences which fall beneath its standard. The child which has believed and obeyed its parents in its childhood does not necessarily believe and obey them during the time of its youth. The parents must realize this and change their manner of correcting and guiding the child from the beginning of its youth.

Youth makes the child inclined to look on its parents or guardians as old-fashioned people. The present education given in schools and the child's own experience of things around it support it in this idea. If the parents force their ideas on the youth, he first plays with them, making them think that he agrees with them; but in the next stage he avoids them, and in the third stage he argues with them and opposes them. Once a youth has arrived at this third stage he stands on his own feet, and there is little hope that the parents can guide him; they are then obliged to let him take his own way whether right or wrong.

Among a hundred youths one may take a right way by himself, and five out of the hundred may find their way through the

dark but ninety-five are lost owing to the absence of guidance. Life is a sea upon which it is difficult to find one's way, and as direction is necessary when travelling on the sea, so guidance is most necessary during the period of youth.

The principal thing one has to remember concerning the education of young people is to help them, without their knowing it, to think for themselves. The nature of youth, and especially that of the youth of today, is such that as soon as he feels that he is directed by someone he feels that he is harnessed to a carriage, and in this he feels the absence of freedom. An essential thing in guiding the youth is to make lines of thought and to place them before him, in order that he may use the lines as a track to follow. True virtue comes from independent thinking, not from being under subjection. But at the same time it must be remembered that the independent spirit which is expressed without consideration is devoid of beauty. It is desirable that a youth should show consideration in his thought, speech, and action, for freedom without consideration lacks beauty.

In the guidance of youth the same five directions of development must be considered as in the education of children: physical, mental, moral, social, and spiritual.

While considering the physical development of a youth one should remember that youth is the time of full blossom, the most delicate and important time in everyone's life. If the blossom is ruined the fruit is lost. Therefore youth is the golden opportunity. It is the time when a person is not yet set in his ideas, not addicted to certain habits, ready to accept new ideas. An intellectual youth generally seeks for new ideas. Youth is a time when one is most inclined to changes of every sort, and therefore youth is not fixed in particular habits.

Very often the parents, not knowing what it involves when their child grows too rapidly, do not consider many things concerning its life which may harm it later. It is essential that special attention be given to the balance between activity and repose, to the sleep, food, and recreation of the youth. In a child a nervous temperament is a sign of intelligence; a genius is generally nervous in his youth.

Youth is the time when, if the child is sensitive to conditions,



every little thing around it will go to its heart. If there is disharmony around a youth, if there is sorrow, disagreement among his people, depression, it all weighs upon him, at a time when he is capable of feeling and yet incapable of helping the situation. It is not fair to draw sympathy from the youth, and especially from the one who has a feeling heart, for one's pains and troubles; for there is a time for every experience and that time comes later. If pain is sown in the heart of the youth decay develops at the root of his life, making him bitter all through life.

Wise parents or guardians must know that youth is the springtime of every soul, the kingliness which is given once to every soul to experience. No soul may be debarred from nature's kingdom. It is the duty of parents and guardians to respect youth and take care that this springtime is given free to the youth, without burdening his life with the woes of worldly life which await every soul.

What is called youth in general terms is particularly the springtime of the physical body; and therefore if the child is physically well nourished and well drilled, so that he shows power and energy in every movement, it makes him fit for any sort of work that he may desire to learn, and for making his way in life. Seeing the youth enthusiastic and vigorous, the parents sometimes do not consider the fact that every burden, physical or mental, which might weigh him down is most injurious at this period of his life, although at a later age the same burden would not be so harmful. Youth being the time of full bloom, if the child does not show abundant energy and enthusiasm then at what other time will it do so? Therefore it is necessary that by physical exercise, proper rest, and good nourishment the youth is kept in perfect balance.

In youth an extra energy is born which expresses itself in passion and emotion; if the parents do not know how to deal with it the child can easily abuse it. There is no end of abuse of energy to be found in the world today in spite of all the attention that seems to be awakening in various educational centres. The idea is that it is no use watching a child, for this shows lack of trust; nor is it right to correct a child when it has gone too far in a certain playful tendency. There is no end of temptation which

attracts a youth. It is natural for a youth who has just passed his period of playfulness to continue to play in the ways which to him seem harmless. An important part of the education of a youth is therefore to be told things plainly, and to be made aware of the advantages and disadvantages of various interests in life. It is not much use for a child to read books concerning the life of youth. Personal advice on the subjects in question will prove to be more effective.

Very often, before the parents could ever imagine their child's inclination towards things of a serious nature, the child happens to have already experienced them, while being absolutely ignorant of the consequences. The younger generation seems to be declining every day in physical health, in enthusiasm, compared with the people of the past. So it is most necessary that in the present age special care should be taken to ensure that youth is trained to realize the great importance in life of good physical health, upon which depend happiness, prosperity, and success.

Mental strength in youth depends upon single-mindedness, and youth is inclined to look in a thousand directions instead of keeping its mind fixed on one object at a time. A youth who is helped, or who is naturally inclined, to keep his mind in one single direction without wavering, is sure to have success in life.

Youth also has an inclination to be impatient, for it is the time when energy is working with great force, and this makes youth impulsive and lacking in patience. But if the child were taught patience when it is not already inclined to it by nature, it would surely succeed in all that it might undertake in life.

The time of youth has a certain influence on the life of the child, in that it makes its mind too active; and too much activity produces confusion in its life. Besides the physical energy beating constantly through the pulse of the youth brings about difficulties in his life. Therefore guardians who are eager for his studies and progress should take care of the mind of the youth, which needs to be clear, poised, and balanced; without this the child is a trouble to his parents and a difficulty for himself. Youth with thought and consideration is like a flower with a beautiful colour and fragrance.



The moral education of the youth is also of the greatest importance. A child must grow to recognize a father in every elderly man, a mother in every elderly woman, a sister in girls of his age, and a brother in boys like himself. In this way the obligations of one soul to another in this world will be better understood. When a youth considers his duty only to someone closely related to him, and not to the others, he becomes limited; his point of view becomes narrowed. How much better the world would be if every young man considered it his duty to take care of and be responsible for every young girl as he would for his own sister; there would not be so much sorrow and disappointment. The greatest moral a youth could be taught is to understand his obligations to others, in order to fill his place fittingly in the scheme of life.

Youth should be taught to recognize the great power of honesty, instead of considering honesty only as a virtue. The child must be taught to make an ideal for itself and to live up to it. It is no use giving an ideal to a child, for the ideal of one person is not made for another.

A young man who realizes that his word engages his honour is an example for the present age when the word, even supported by twenty seals and stamps and a signature on a paper, does not hold good. A youth with this sense of honour and dignity, whose heart is awakened to human sympathy, who has a keen sense of duty and who shows thought and consideration for others, is a model for the present generation in moulding its personality.

Moral development does not consist only of acquiring an ideal and good manners, but also of the power to endure all the jarring influences that one meets in everyday life. Besides the consciousness of one's obligations towards everyone that one meets in life is an elementary part of moral education. A youth can be without regard for delicacy of thought, but if his morality is developed he will act morally with greater ease than those who have learned morals later in life.

Life is nature, time makes it; once a person becomes hardened in a certain way his soul becomes a mould of that particular nature, and all he says or does in life shows the design of this mould.

Very often it happens that a person arrives at the realization of the great value of moral qualities in the later part of his life, and yet cannot act according to the ideal he values most. It is just like an earthen pot which, having been put into the mould before it was properly finished, comes out of the fire hardened; the potter may want to change the shape of the pot, but it cannot be done any more. If parents and guardians only realized what an opportunity the time of youth is in life, they would make out of youth what the Indians call the 'plant of wishes', which bears as its fruit all one's desires.

In youth there is hope, and there is an object to look forward to. In accomplishing this object a youth requires two powers: the power of will and the power of the beauty of thought, speech, and action. Many people in this world, with all their power, physical, mental, and every other form of power, even with an army at their disposal, prove helpless through the lack of beauty, the power of which is sometimes greater than any other. It is the balance of will and beauty that results in wisdom; and in a youth these three qualities form a trinity, which is the ideal of perfection.

## ii

Youth is naturally inclined to be sociable. If it is not so it means something is wrong, for it is most desirable for a youth to make friends and to show reciprocity in friendship, in love, or in courtship, and to show courtesy, kindness, and goodwill. Joining youth associations, looking after one's friends and relatives, giving them welcome and warmth, is something that is expected of the youth. There is, however, always a danger for the youth who is sociable and mixes freely in all circles whether desirable or undesirable. Youth is to some extent a time of blindness, when the passions and emotions are in full play. It is just as easy for a youth to take a wrong direction, as it is for him to take a right direction; and a growing youth, full of enthusiasm, overcome with emotion, and eager to experience anything new and interesting, may take any road in life opened to him by his friends. Therefore it is the duty of the guardians to keep him away from all undesirable



influences, without giving the slightest idea that they control him and his affairs or deprive him of his freedom.

The higher the ideal of the youth, the greater is the future for him. A youth who is led to work for friends of his age, for his associations, for his community, for the nation, is indeed on the right road.

The youth who avoids the friendship of his own sex, or the one who is not attracted by the opposite sex, is abnormal, and either of these cases should be taken as a disorder and should be treated in its early stages. If it is allowed to go on it results in great disappointment. The youth who is disinclined to associate with his own sex is as a rule a timid nature and weak in will-power. It is sometimes caused by feebleness of body and sometimes by having been brought up with extra love, care, and tenderness at the hands of women alone. Therefore the life of a boy should begin with having boys as companions. In this way he receives from others the nature which is necessary for him.

It is one thing to be born male; it is another thing to develop a male personality. It is not sufficient to be born male; a male personality must be developed. It can be developed in youth, but if this time is missed, then it is almost too late, although no doubt a youth of such an abnormal nature can still be placed in surroundings from which in time he may receive the impressions he needs to complete his male personality.

A youth who responds to joy and to sorrow and to those near and dear to him, who echoes every impulse, who is interested in everything desirable and who is alive to all pleasure and joy, is a normal youth. If he is guided rightly he will make his life worth living.

The same tendencies may be observed in girls. A girl who is not brought up with other girls develops a character which is not feminine. The consequences are she is repulsive to her own sex and unattractive to the opposite sex. When in youth a girl begins to show male traits in her personality, she should by every means be placed in female surroundings, which in time may so impress her spirit that her personality partakes of the qualities that are necessary to complete her female personality.

There are also youths who are strongly drawn to their own sex

and away from the opposite sex. Amongst them some are physically and some mentally abnormal; but there are some in whom the desire for the opposite sex is still asleep, and it needs awakening; very often in cases of the latter kind difficulties arise. People blame them for something which is not their fault; for people not knowing the truth expect them to be as responsive to the opposite sex as everybody else. And when they do not find them as they expect them to be people become impatient with them. Many courtships and marriages are destroyed by this lack of understanding. If one only knew the art of doing it one would wait and help gently and patiently, as if for the ripening of green fruit.

A youth with good manners and education yet without endurance, cannot make great progress in life, for he tends only to associate with those who come up to his standard; he will ignore or avoid those who fall beneath it; and as his sense of discernment becomes keener he will become more and more intolerant.

The downfall of modern civilization is caused by the lack of sincere sociability. There is a diplomatic form of politeness which is only politeness in form, without sincerity; but true politeness belongs to the one who is sympathetic. Sincerity is the principal thing in life.

Youth is the age which is most attracted to superficiality; that is the reason why many youths adopt an artificial manner of thought, speech, and action, which is very undesirable and does not benefit their life.

It is important to inculcate sincerity in the character of the youth. To give a youth a love of sincerity is extremely useful, for the power of sincerity can work miracles. Also pride, a natural spirit which grows in a youth, must be moulded into an ideal. The same pride which makes man stiff, stern, and inconsiderate, if developed into what is called self-respect, will be the true sign of honour in life; for pride when guided into the right channel gives rise to consideration. Such a person becomes careful not to think, say, or do what falls beneath his standard of virtue. Pride rightly directed moulds the character, and it is the perfected character which culminates in an ideal.

The development of the spiritual side of the youth comes before



anything else in life. Often spirituality is confused with religion; in reality, however, this word has quite a different meaning. Religion for many is that which they know to be their people's belief; spirituality is the revealing of the divine light which is hidden in every soul. It has no concern with any particular religion. Whatever religion a person belongs to is no good to him if he has no spirituality. But if a man is spiritual, then whatever be his faith he will profit by it. Therefore, before thinking what religion the youth should belong to, one should train him in a spiritual ideal.

A youth of today, trained in the spirit of commercialism and with material motives put before him, can never grow up to become a really happy person who can impart his happiness to his fellow-men. The greatest drawback of modern times is the bringing up of a youth in an absolutely material atmosphere, so that he has nothing to look forward to beyond matter and material conditions, which are as poor as matter itself. No child comes on earth without a spiritual ideal, but it is the surroundings in which it lives, its guardians, its associates, that make the child materialistic. It cannot develop by itself when all the surroundings are different. In this way the spiritual ideal which the child brings on earth is strangled by material guardians and associates.

The world of today would have been much better than it is if there had been a spiritual ideal placed before it as well as a material ideal, which seems to be the only goal of the modern world. If one can learn from experience, the recent catastrophes have not been a small example of what the development of materialism can bring about. If the world goes on in the same manner, what will be the result? There is no hope for the betterment of humanity until the spiritual ideal has been brought forward and made the central theme of education both at home and in the schools. This only can be the solution of the difficult problem of world reform that faces humanity.

How to begin the training of youth in spiritual ideals is not an easy problem to solve; for there are several dangers which have to be considered before beginning such a training with a youth. It is not necessary that the youth should be made a religious fanatic or religiously proud; he must not be made to

think that his spiritual direction makes him superior to others. Goodness always gives a certain vanity, and an undeveloped spirituality brings a still greater vanity. If by spirituality a youth is made bigoted in his own faith, looking at the followers of every other faith with contempt, or with a sort of indifference, it cannot be right. How many religious souls there still are in this world who think their scripture is the only scripture, their Church the only religion, and everyone else infidels! Such a faith can never produce spirituality in a soul.

Spirituality comes from the softening of the heart, which becomes frozen by the coldness of the surrounding life. The influence of worldly life upon the mind generally has a freezing effect; for selfishness coming from all sides naturally makes a man cool and selfish. Therefore it is the constant softening of the heart of the youth that is necessary. There are two ways of softening the heart; one is by helping the youth to open himself to the beauty which is shining in all its various forms. The other is to give him a tendency to righteousness, which is the very essence of the soul. These things cannot be taught, but they can be awakened in the heart of the youth if the parents or the guardians only know how. The child must not be forced by principles, but love of virtue should be created in his heart, for in the inner nature of every soul there is love of virtue. Spirituality in the real sense of the word is the discovering of the spirit, which is attained by rising above self or by diving into self.

The greatest fault of the day is the absence of stillness. Stillness is nowadays often taken as leisureliness or as slowness. Modern man lacks concentration and carries with him an atmosphere of restlessness; with all his knowledge and progress he feels uncomfortable himself, and unintentionally brings discomfort to others. Stillness is therefore the most important lesson that can be taught to the youth of today.

Spirituality is like the water hidden in the depth of the earth: hidden in the heart of man, this water which is spirituality must be, so to speak, dug out. This digging is done when one takes pains in awakening one's sympathy towards others, in harmonizing with others and in understanding others.

The outer knowledge of human life and nature is called



philosophy, but the inner knowledge of these is called psychology. This knowledge can be studied; yet the real spirit of this knowledge is manifested in the awakening of the soul. The youth must be given higher thoughts in order that he may think about a higher ideal, uphold a higher conception of life, gain a higher aspiration, and carry through life a higher attitude, a higher point of view.

It is in the ennobling of the soul that spirituality lies, not in a mere show of spirituality; and nobleness of the soul is realized in the feeling of selflessness. Whatever be a man's rank or position, if he shows selflessness in life he is truly noble. The spiritual nobility is the real aristocracy, for it expresses itself in democracy. In a really spiritual person aristocracy and democracy are one, for these ideals, which both have their spiritual beauty, are summed up in the one spirit of nobleness. A youth must be taught that it is not becoming angelic which shows spirituality; it is becoming human which is the true sign of the spiritual man.





RASA SHASTRA  
THE SCIENCE OF LIFE'S CREATIVE  
FORCES





## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. Sex	119
II. Half-bodies	121
III. Attraction and Repulsion	123
IV. On Some Ideals	126
V. Types of Lovers	131
VI. The Character of the Beloved	134
VII. Modesty	138
VIII. The Awakening of Youth	142
IX. Courtship	144
X. Chivalry	149
XI. Marriage	153
XII. Beauty	158
XIII. Passion	162
XIV. Celibacy	165
XV. Monogamy	170
XVI. Polygamy	174
XVII. Perversion	181
XVIII. Prostitution	188

*When shall the mocking world withhold its blame,  
When shall men cease to darken thus my name,  
Calling the love which is my pride, my shame?*

*The joy of love no heart can feel alone,  
The fire of love at first unseen, unknown,  
In flames of love from either side is blown.*

*O, Asif, tread thy pathway carefully  
Across this difficult world; for canst thou see,  
A further journey is awaiting thee.*

ASIF (H.E.H. Mir Mahboob Ali Khan,  
late Nizam of Hyderabad).



## CHAPTER I

### SEX

SEX IS a direction. Two is a part of one, growing out of one. As the conductor guides the music, each movement of his baton demands a second movement; a single motion is not possible. A single stroke has no meaning; but as soon as there is a second motion, then the rhythm of the music begins and wins even the hearts of children. In the same way every single expression of activity reveals two aspects or directions of the same action; and these may be distinguished from each other as its positive and negative aspects.

The Supreme Intelligence, which is the source of this world of variety, works through numberless paths and channels. Every channel it takes must necessarily be but a limited expression of itself; but it is humanity that has been considered by the wise of all ages to be its clearest and final expression. As it is written in the Semitic tradition, man was created last and 'in His own image'.

Think of human intelligence. The tendency of human intelligence is to limit. From the hosts of ideas that come to him, man must select; he can only follow one path at a time. As man advances along his chosen path, he finds that it branches right and left; and ever and again he must make a fresh choice. His life may be called an unending choice; and his limitations make him what he is. He must choose his house and a room in his house; he attaches himself to a certain community and to a certain faith. He says, 'I am a Christian, an Englishman, a Londoner, an inventor', and so on, as he names qualities and details which in his own opinion constitute his individual self. By his habit of mind he is inclined to begin by looking first at the smallest and most limited aspects of himself.

How does man create his life? Firstly, he sees an object, and then, inspired by that object he moves on to further creation. He plans a picture, and as he works at it the picture itself suggests

further developments to him. He paints and looks and is pleased; and then he begins anew. Thus his intelligence works its way out. And every act of his life, as he thus works his way, shows these same two aspects or directions, one expressive, the other responsive. It is through the reciprocal action of these two factors that each of his activities advances towards perfection.

In this same way the Supreme Intelligence seems to create its design, inspired by its own activity as is the artist by his picture; and this shows that its very nature is such that it must forever be advancing, breaking a way and hewing out a means by which to express itself. And its every activity shows two aspects, two directions, which balance and complete each other, giving light and shade to the picture, giving rhythm to the music, developing the vision of perfection.



## CHAPTER II

### HALF-BODIES

IN SANSKRIT woman is called *Ardhangi*, the half-body; half of that complete body constituted of male and female. Throughout creation each element attracts to itself its like; as Sa'di says, 'Each element returns in time to the single goal of that element'.

This law may be more clearly observed in the attraction that exists between the sexes, and is indeed the chief reason of the attraction between these two halves which are derived from each other. Each sex is made of the element of the opposite sex; the female born of the seed of the male, and the male moulded in the womb of the female.

The harmony that exists between persons of the same sex is also accounted for by this similarity. As each element attracts to itself its own element, so male harmonizes with male, and female with female. A man feels in his own sphere when he is with his men friends, talking and chatting freely, without conventions, formalities, or restraint. So a maiden is harmonious with maidens, and a matron among matrons. But greater harmony and more naturalness is found between individuals of opposite sexes; and the reason for this lies in their contrast. Though of the same element, they are counterbalancing aspects of it; and each sex clearly perceives that one provides the other with what that other lacks. Each draws out something in the other than would otherwise be lost, and makes alive some part of the other that would otherwise lie as dead. Each sex draws from the other thoughtfulness and consideration, the thinking nature. It is through this contrast that the loving nature in man or woman is awakened, so that the heart which was a grave of love becomes a fertile soil, where any seedling of affection will flourish, and bear flower and fruit.

The one may draw from the other who is different a spiritual quality, a moral quality, a talent, a merit, a virtue that had lain

enclosed in a shell, as a pearl lies in the depth of the sea, to become valuable only when brought up and used. There are properties of the spirit which are in its depth, awaiting a lifting hand, and which are brought to the surface only through help coming from one of the opposite sex.

The sexes are dependent upon each other; but of the two, the male is more dependent upon the female than she is upon him. Her position in the scheme of nature is a more responsible one; and the greater the responsibility of a being, the greater is the dependence of others upon that being. An infant, whether boy or girl, is entirely dependent on the mother from the time that the seed is conceived, to the moment of its breathing the air of the earth. 'The arms of the mother are the cradle of heaven', it is said, and from infancy to youth the whole attraction of the boy is towards the mother. The cases where this is not so are exceptions, where there is a departure from the normal state of being.

It is the mother who keeps harmony between father and child, and between brothers and sisters. In poverty she has the care of the money; in sickness the burden falls upon her. She is the centre of the pain of the house. It is her part to keep the family in friendship with the outside world, in sympathy with neighbours; to welcome strangers, and to receive visitors with a smile. Mohammad says, 'Heaven lies at the feet of the mother'. Upon her constancy and endurance depends the unity of the home, which is the unit of the State.

Sometimes we see perfection of human form or personality; and then we seem to see in one individual something of the attributes of both sexes. A man called handsome always represents some trait of the refinement of the feminine; and in the same way a man's beautiful personality has a touch of the gentleness of the female nature. Nor can a woman's beauty of character be complete without some of that dignity which is masculine.

:



### CHAPTER III

## ATTRACTION AND REPULSION

ATTRACTION, and equally repulsion, in sex depend upon the workings of the positive and negative forces in life. Although the male sex may generally be characterized as the positive and the female sex as the negative force in humanity, yet this characterization does not necessarily hold good in all planes of existence. It can easily be seen that when a positive power is confronted by a power that resembles itself, but is positive to a still greater degree, it becomes negative, as a talkative person becomes a listener in the presence of one more talkative than himself. In the same way a negative power ceases to be negative but becomes positive in the presence of a power that is similar to, or still more negative than itself.

The positive is expressive whilst the negative is responsive, as speaking is positive while listening is negative. Throughout life these two forces are seen balancing and completing each other: in the swing of the pendulum, in the beat of the conductor's baton as it marks the rhythm of the music.

Since each finds its completion in the other, these two forces exercise an attraction upon each other. By the very nature of things the negative cannot but be attracted by its positive aspect; and the positive is inevitably attracted towards its negative aspect. The positive is indeed the first to feel attraction; for it is always seeking scope for expression and reaching out towards that in which it finds its balance; and it finds in the negative that pliability for which it searches with the whole strength of its being, in its demand for response. The negative therefore represents beauty while the positive represents power. For power is not of itself beautiful. Power is attracted towards beauty; its desire may be called beauty; and again its power becomes powerless before beauty.

The moon balances the power of the sun. If it were not for the

moon, the sun would burst into flames and set the whole universe on fire. If it were not for the moon, the worlds would break into pieces and the cosmos would scatter.

The negative, by providing the necessary balance to the whole being of the positive, gives beauty to its activity. On the other hand, the positive gives strength to the negative. By its expression of itself, the positive may be said even to create the negative. It is this which is symbolically expressed when it is said that Eve was created from the rib of Adam; that is, the negative created from the positive and actually part of the positive. The negative, then, is derived from the positive and is strengthened by it, and to the positive it returns again; and the positive indeed draws from the negative its positive character. The existence of each depends thus entirely upon the other; and every purpose of each, even its ultimate purpose, is accomplished through the co-operation of both.

Repulsion is caused either through lack of power or of scope on the part of positive or negative. When the positive has not the power to draw to itself the negative, it draws it perhaps half-way, or a little more or less; a lack of power that may actually repel the negative. Or else the positive, being first attracted to the negative and then feeling itself too weak, recoils. Or again the positive may be slow to express itself; and remaining in the attitude of the negative it provokes confusion, since the negative finds no channel through which to respond.

Again the negative, in responding, may express itself in the manner of the positive, and then there must result a clash or conflict; for then there is no scope for the positive. Or else the positive, expressing itself with intensity, may drive back the negative. Or the positive may find the response of the negative so narrow that it finds itself deprived of sufficient opportunity for its full expression. In such cases harmony is not possible, because the negative does not furnish sufficient opportunity or scope for the positive.

Disharmony therefore results when one or the other is frustrated in the desire for self-expression. But harmony is more natural than disharmony. The union of male and female should provide an opportunity within that union for both to attain to the



fullest expression of which they are capable; and neither should find within it an obstacle which impedes his or her fullest development. Every soul is indeed seeking for completion, a search that too often ends in the destruction of beauty; since the human being, deluded and ensnared by the life on the surface, forgets to look into his self, and to discover what is the nature of that 'I' which so desperately desires satisfaction.

## CHAPTER IV

### ON SOME IDEALS

THE MAN who has never had an ideal may hope to find one; he is in a better state than the man who allows the circumstances of life to break his ideal. To fall beneath one's ideal is to lose one's track in life; then confusion rises in the mind, and that light which one should hold high becomes covered and obscured, so that it cannot shine out to light one's path.

The fall of Napoleon may be dated from the day that he abandoned Josephine. With the breaking of the ideal, the whole life cracks and dissolves. As soon as a man begins to think, 'I have done wrong by such and such a person, or such and such a principle', he ceases to be a king within, and cannot be a king without. This does not mean to say that the good succeed in life and that the evil fail, but rather that man only progresses through sincerity in his ideals. For the good of each man is indeed peculiar to himself.

Religion is the school that has developed man; and the ideals that religion presents form a path that leads upward to perfection, that innate and yearning desire of every soul. The difficulty arises when man sees his principles as his goal, and not simply as a means to his goal; for when he begins to worship his own principles he becomes simply an idolater, and he destroys the essence and the life of his ideal.

Can anyone point to a date in history when man first gained wisdom? Wisdom is the property of humanity. The expressions of this wisdom differ at different times to suit different peoples; and it is the differences that have always been noticed, and not the similarities.

Artist or workman, philosopher or scientist, wherever found, arrives by his individual path at the same knowledge of the laws of nature, and thus learns those fundamental laws of ethics which do not change from country to country, nor from age to age, nor do they contradict each other.



And the wise of all ages have taught that it is the knowledge of the divine Being that is life; and the only reality. Although a human activity may have a number of complicated motives, some of which are base and gross, it is the aspiration towards divinity, the desire towards beauty, which is its soul, its life, its reality. And it is in proportion to the degree of strength or weakness of his aspiration towards beauty that man's ideal is great or small, and his religion is great or small.

There exists an affinity between the negative and the positive which inclines the one towards the other, and towards union, which results in a fresh conception of beauty. Ancient mythology has expressed this beautifully in the figure of Cupid, whose wings show that he is a spirit, and who, coming in the guise of a child, represents childhood. Cupid, the spirit of affinity, draws two of opposite sex together for the purpose of a birth of beauty. Thus it happens that the human kind is strongly attracted to its opposite; and when the expressive and responsive tendencies awaken through love and passion a third being is created, and a ray finds its abode in the mother's womb.

Thus it is seen that it is the spirit that possesses the sexes, in order to bring them together for its own purpose of manifestation. Therefore many religions and philosophies have considered the sex-relationship to be most sacred, since it is thus that the spirit manifests itself. And for the same reason the sex-relationship may become most sinful, if this purpose of the spirit is lost to view. For to disregard this purpose of the spirit is a defiance of the law of the whole mechanism, which inevitably drags the structure to ruins.

There is nothing of this earth more valuable than the seed of man, the source of further manifestation; and by its loss every door of happiness in life is closed. But man is usually so careful with his money and property and jewels, and desires so earnestly to increase them, that he sacrifices everything to them; and he becomes regardless of the jewel of life which is his own life, character, and personality, and which is more precious than any property.

Again, every religion prohibits marriage between blood relations, though the rules vary somewhat; as, for instance, in

the West, marriage between an uncle and his niece is sometimes permitted, a union usually considered unlawful in the East, as by some other Western religions. However, certain modern social revolutionaries are now questioning the laws which make blood-relationship a bar to marriage. These laws are nevertheless rooted in truth; for where there is no expansion, there is no progress.

Expansion is necessary for physical reasons. Between blood relations the negative and positive forces are not contrary enough; and when the battery which depends upon the strength and contrast of these forces becomes weaker, its issue becomes correspondingly weaker; or else there is no issue. Morally, also, progress demands expansion. Has not the whole of creation been gradually built by expansion?

The vigour of the Western nations is, to a great extent, due to the intermixture of innumerable tribes and races. Even now, before our eyes, a young and promising nation of extraordinary vitality is developing in the United States of America, formed of the many elements of all the European nations. There are certainly disadvantages in interracial and international marriages; but these are small in comparison with the advantages.

Pride of birth and of rank, and also of community and religion, have always kept humanity back by forming barriers that prevent natural expansion. The Western aristocracies have suffered incalculable loss thereby; but this is most clearly seen in the history of the East, where the Hindu castes, by limiting themselves to their own circle, have brought ruin to their race.

The Eastern custom of child-marriage is a product of family pride, since each family has wished that the wife of their son should be brought up in the traditions of their own family. The conservative ideas of the Parsis, that most exclusive community, operating through many generations, have produced notable physical alterations in their people, among whom, to instance one point, only a small percentage have normal eyesight.

The national ideal which unites human beings in a desire to uphold certain social laws and certain ideals of civilization, is necessary to human life; but to make these ideals barriers that separate humanity into distinct sections must effectively prevent



the progress of humanity as one whole; and this progress is the basic idea of religion.

Nations endeavour to progress as nations, and races as races; and each race and nation is prepared to hinder the progress of any other. Thus, through wars and conflicts of every kind, the patriotism of each race has become so individual and distinct, that an interracial marriage means that one or other of the contracting parties must renounce his or her patriotism; a renunciation that is sometimes almost a death.

It is the young people who are most often drawn to an interracial marriage, the young, generous, and idealistic. But it is not often that they meet their corresponding social class; it is not often that aristocratic or educated aliens meet the aristocratic or educated natives of any country; and yet it is true that there is a great similarity between the corresponding social and intellectual classes of all civilizations.

People marry for various reasons: some because it is the custom, some for the sake of home life, because man is a dependent creature, and desires a companion in the joy and sorrow of life, or because marriage carries weight in the social world; for generally a house where a couple live is a home. Others again are tempted by rank, birth, position, wealth; and these marry the thing desired, and not the human being. Others have a wish to leave children, so that their name may not pass from the earth, or the property they have collected fall into the hands of strangers; and some other few marry for love.

There is a tendency in husband or wife to own his or her mate; and the stronger of the two will often attempt to do this by the right of marriage itself, having forgotten the reason for which he or she contracted the marriage. This tendency to ownership makes many a marriage a captivity.

Zafar wrote, 'O Zafar, you cannot call him a man, though he be in human form, who is without thought in anger or counsel in passion.' The human being is supposed to take counsel with his own principles of modesty, of chivalry, and of shame, and therein to differ from the animals; and that expression of his sexual passion which has no regard for these principles may be called adultery. Adultery is in fact that which, done under the spell of

passion and in the blindness of the moment, brings afterwards repentance and shame, with remorse for the consequences. A drunken man does in his intoxication what he would never have done when sober; and so laws are framed to control drunken madness and folly.

To resist evil, however, usually means to participate in and be guilty of the same evil. There is a story told of Mohammad, that a man who had always maligned him and behaved as a bitter and treacherous enemy came to see him; and his disciples, hoping for revenge, were disappointed and indignant to find that Mohammad treated his despicable enemy with courtesy, even deference, granting his request. 'Did you not see the gray in his beard?' asked Mohammad after the man had gone. 'The man is old, and his age at least called for my courtesy.' It is forgiveness and that forbearance which is a recognition of the freedom and dignity of the human being, that consume all ugliness and burn up all unworthiness, leaving only beauty there.



## CHAPTER V

### TYPES OF LOVERS

#### i

IN THIS world of variety no two faces are identical, nor any two characters, nor any two personalities. In all ages it has been the belief of the wise, and the realization of the greatest intelligences, that there is unity in the scheme of things; and that harmony rules the whole of existence, which proves its evolution from one single source of activity. And that the source from which all springs is a distinct and definite individuality is proved by the distinct individuality of each created thing. In each, one sees 'I', conscious of its separate, distinct, and peculiar identity.

No two roses, even of the same stem, are exactly alike; no two leaves are identical. And the wider our study of human character, the stronger grows the conviction that each human individual is remote, unexplored, and unknown. Nevertheless, just as we call a whole variety of flowers by the name of rose, so we may vaguely generalize and divide human beings into varieties, distinguishable from each other in their general attitude towards the opposite sex.

We see the idealist, imaginative, a worshipper of beauty, whose heart is touched by one of the opposite sex who appeals to his idealism, lose himself in his thought of her. The beauty that he sees before him is the food of his love; on this beauty his love is sustained; but as soon as his heart is deprived of it, then his love weakens. And when his ideal ceases to be an ideal in his eyes, then his heart dies.

We see also the artist in love, a man of wit and intelligence, refined and fastidious, but affectionate too, and with intense sensibilities that respond instantly to beauty. Fine and yet gross, he is quick to love and yet able to hide his affection; he is ready to be kind to her who loves him, and to conceal his attraction from her who attracts him most. The artist in love is attracted by beauty and grace; and according to his evolution and the manners

of his environment, he is interested in all that appears to him exquisite, lovely in manners, in form or in speech.

Then we see a third type; who is fond of women without seeing much difference between them or specifying which is which. On whatever woman his glance falls, he sees her nude. In loving a woman, he does not love the human being, but simply the woman. His emotions are dead; he is uninterested in her; he finds her simply a means for his own self-expression.

A fourth type is rough and brutal. If he thinks of a woman, it is to enjoy her in thought. He is crude in his actions towards women, passionate, lustful. He is not only uninterested and regardless of their feelings, but he does not stop at actively inflicting suffering, so long as he finds his own satisfaction.

And we see yet another type of man, who perhaps alone should be called lover; a man not susceptible, though kindly and sympathetic to all. But once he loves, he is ready to accept poison or nectar at the hands of his beloved; and once he professes his love to his beloved, he is absolutely hers. A man who keeps constant his love for his beloved, and, holding her in his heart, cannot admit any other save her alone. Whilst the idealist is captivated by the beauty of her personality, this lover looks at the beauty of his beloved's soul. His love is as sacred to him as his religion; she whom he loves is a part of his own being, and in her life he lives. Love is to him an everlasting bond here and in the hereafter; it is the best proof to him of persistence of life after death.

## ii

There was an idea of old among the Hindus that mankind falls into three distinct classes: *Deva*, the divine man, *Manusha*, the human man, and *Rakshasa*, the monster man. Before marriage it was the custom, and it still exists, to consult someone who could read the horoscopes of the contracting parties, so that a third person, an intelligent observer, could give advice, and thus prevent the union of two beings belonging to different types of humanity, which could never be harmonious to each other.

The idea was that there should be harmony between two: both *Deva*, or both *Rakshasa*; thus kind to kind, wise to wise, cruel to



cruel, foolish to foolish. While it was thought there should be harmony between mates of classes near to each other, that is to say between Deva, divine man, and Manusha, human man, or between Manusha and Rakshasa, it was believed there was little chance of harmony between Deva and Rakshasa, that is between divine and monster man; and that either the finer nature would be dragged down and ruined by the grosser, or else the grosser nature would be destroyed by the finer nature. The third person, the Brahmin, with the excuse of reading the horoscopes, could make every enquiry about character, and was thus able to place the man and woman in their rightful categories as he observed them, and so give warning, and possibly avert future disaster.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHARACTER OF THE BELOVED

#### i

IN Persian poetry a certain characteristic called *Shukhi* is given to the beloved woman. The charm which the Persian poet describes by *Shukhi* is more usually found in woman than in man; although it is possible that many women would consider it a characteristic of the men whom they love. This character of the beloved can scarcely be called beautiful, although it is alluring. Its chief property is heedlessness, or a kind of careless independence that is touched with insolence.

Changeable, she shows and yet she does not show herself; quick to laugh, she is quick to seize upon the amusing or ridiculous side of things; and yet she herself is sensitive to ridicule and to attentions; trying very daintily to test just how deep her lover's feeling for her has gone.

Selfish and amiable, she responds and yet refuses to respond; light-hearted and talkative, mocking and perpetually amused, though ready to take offence, she is a constant source of surprise to her lover, who feels he must ever be on the alert if he would really hold her; and too, that he must move gently, lest he should injure a being that seems to him so much gayer and lighter, so much weaker and slighter, so much more delicate and airy and graceful than he knows himself to be.

This beloved is life to her lover; and thereby in truth lies the secret of her attraction for him. She is always fluttering outside the reach of his comprehension. Her sunshine and laughter invigorate; her mockery and ridicule, her thousand demands are incentives; even her light-hearted insolence is a spur to prompt him to efforts in all kinds of directions, where otherwise he would never have ventured.

But what reason does he give to himself for his love? He will give a hundred reasons, and yet be puzzled to give even one that



is sufficient. He despairs of making her understand the depth of his feeling; he imagines himself ill and dying, and her answer when the news is brought to her:

She lightly laughed; 'And so is Mazhar dead?  
'Alas, poor helpless one! I knew not, I,  
What was his trouble.' Then again she said:  
'I did not think him ill enough to die.'

Or the lover imagines himself dead and in his grave; and he pictures her, as she lightly steps over the grass that covers him, drawing her draperies closely round her lest perchance he should stretch up his hands and touch them. And yet love, like the fire, dies out unless it is fed with fuel; and the lover in his despair recognizes this too, and blames her for giving the encouragement that he desires. She represents in herself the evanescence of joy, the swift passing of laughter, the difficulty of holding the moment of beauty.

The heart's unending malady is she,  
And she herself the only remedy.

## ii

According to Hindu ideas there are four different types of women, who influence the lives of men.

*Padmani*, the ideal of the poet, fine and delicate and graceful in bearing, is made to be loved and is herself full of love. Her voice is low and soft, her words are gracious, her expression is sweet and gentle; she is admired by women and her friendship and presence bring heaven on earth to men. When she makes a friend of a man, it is something of a venture or a step, taken as it were out of her own circle; for women are her natural friends, and to them she turns, both out of interest and for protection. In her heart is kept one beloved alone, whom nothing can remove. Her smile for him is as the unveiling of heaven, her kind glance is a lasting impression, her sweet words ring for ever in his heart. And it is clear to all that she looks on him as her king.

She is intelligent and simple, courageous and shy, patient and enduring, constant and firm in thought; and she is moved by all

things that are tender and appealing. There is a fittingness in her behaviour. She has a love of order, a respect for the aged, patience and constancy in face of difficulty; and she is self-denying and unassuming throughout all. Her affections are deep, and she finds them inexpressible; but her face, her features, her glance, every word and every movement show a picture of beauty and devotion to the ideal. Rarely does one see a Padmani in life; and the man who wins her heart gains the kingdom of Indra Loka, the heaven of the Hindus.

*Chitrani* is beautiful and brilliant. She is happy amongst women, but prefers the friendship of the opposite sex. She is affectionate by nature, and desires affection. Her voice is music, a song; and there is poetry in her words. She is not so idealistic as Padmani, but she is refined and skilled in manner, and delightful and amusing in expressing her likes and dislikes. She herself loves but one man, though her manner may show another that he might perhaps be able to win her love too. She is vain and she is modest; she is bold and she is exclusive. She plays at hide-and-seek with her lover. Her swift glance, the lift of her eyebrows, her slightest gesture, a movement of a hand or of a shoulder, will convey her thought or mood as no words can. She expresses her love and wins her lover's heart a thousand times over; and one straight look of her eyes draws his soul to the surface. She is controlled by him and yet controls. She is with him and yet apart. She is Maya, the elusive one. She is the pearl of his heart.

*Shankani* is strong, rough, and determined. She is desperate in her likes and dislikes. Her heart is gained in a moment if her passion is touched; and she changes easily from one lover to another. Men are her preoccupation; but the love of any one man does not impress her deeply, nor could she for her part hold any man for ever. She is forward in expressing herself, and she is emotional. She is little inclined to friendship with women, and they find her inconsiderate towards them. She is ungainly in figure. She is unbalanced in mind. One day she will esteem a person highly; the next day her devotion is thrown to the ground like a stone and broken.

*Hastani* is greedy and impulsive. Voice, movement, words, all show that self-indulgence and passion predominate in her. She



does not form any deep or serious attachment in life; and she will suddenly break a thread which unites, with a word of anger, or a hasty feeling of displeasure or disagreement. Her actions are untimely; there is an abruptness in her ways that jars peace or friendship. She does not appeal to women, who are on their guard against her and fear her; nor does she prove a pleasant and lasting comrade even to her own mate.

From the ideal of Padmani to the idea of Hastani, there is seen to be increasing force in the power of expressing emotion, but also a lessening of the capability of holding any lasting attachment. In Chitrani there is perhaps an equal balance between depth of feeling and beauty in expression of feeling; while in Padmani there is an absorption in the ideal which means selflessness. And this is actually more fruitful in producing the beauty that gives solace and calm and the glow of happiness, than anything else in life.

## CHAPTER VII

### MODESTY

#### i

*HAYYA*, or modesty, is not artificial in the sense in which, for instance, obedience to many of the social laws may be called artificial. Just as wisdom and morality are learned of nature, so also does modesty come from nature. It is a quality of beauty. It is the essential quality of beauty which the great artist understands. By veiling his thought he conveys an impression many times more beautiful than does the artist who is unskilled in expression.

The poet dives into life, listening to that voice which is inaudible to those engaged on its surface. Not only poets sound the depths, for all men strive for beauty, which lies deep within each man's spirit; but if any, after sounding the depths of life, have been able to convey something of their exaltation and their anguish at the touch of beauty, it has been the poets with their veils and clouds of language.

Consciousness in fact demands a veil. God and man are the two aspects of being, and man and woman are the two aspects of humanity; and a veil envelops that phase of each aspect where consciousness is most developed. In other words, the highest phase of each aspect of life is covered and veiled. Communion with God, the revelation of man's unity with God, and his recognition of God, have always been expressed in parables. Christ, like every great mystic, conveyed the beauty of his teaching in veiled words. Religious language has always been symbolic; truth has ever been given through symbols, such as those of gods and goddesses, and the symbol of the cross.

For every tendency of man, nature seems to make a corresponding provision; it is this that reveals the intelligence working behind this world of names and forms. No man-made moral dictates modesty; it is the nature of beauty to veil and guard itself, and disclose itself but little. And very different customs



among various races show this quality, but it becomes hardened and rigid in its external expressions in social life.

In America, a country of greater freedom than any other, of vast spaces and wide horizons, where men from all parts and of every class gather in the hope of finding larger opportunities and more liberal chances for self-expression, this same quality is seen prevailing unweakened. Natural human characteristics in fact become stronger under freedom. Natural tendencies develop into customs which grow rigid and lifeless in time, and losing their meaning become in their turn fetters on the freedom of the very nature that produced them.

In some parts of the East, women of society and education dressed for social occasions veil themselves entirely, and out of modesty leave only the feet uncovered; whilst others clothe the feet and the whole body except the sides of the waist. These customs would seem offensive to women of the same position and distinction in Western countries, who through modesty cover all except shoulders, neck and arms. Though these customs differ, all express the same tendency to modesty.

A custom in a race called primitive by European society demands that a man shall not look at the mother of his bride; out of respect for her he must not raise his eyes to her face. It is as if dignity veiled the face of the older woman from his gaze. And this custom seems but an extreme form of that same feeling which in countries far from this race demands that the bride herself shall appear veiled at the marriage ceremony.

The emotions which the human being conscious of the beauty of humanity veils in himself, he also desires to cover in others. It is this desire that the Prophet Mohammad described as the true religion, *al hayya wa'l iman*. The veil of the widow is a covering of her sorrow from the gaze of the curious, but it is equally a warning sign to the stranger to avert his eyes and thus shield her; the same may be said of the veil of the nun. The desire to hide emotion, which is one of the highest attributes of humanity, cannot exist without a tendency to shield another. It is this shielding tendency which is the source of courtesy: courtesy which ennobles and exalts mankind, beautifying the relationship of the sexes towards one another and of class towards class.

To violate modesty is to develop coarseness which breaks the ideal of humanity. But by preserving this inner restraining grace man develops his perception of ideal beauty; and 'poor in spirit' he is indeed blessed, for he becomes conscious in human life of heavenly loveliness.

ii

In the veiling and unveiling of beauty lies every purpose of creation. The Shah of Persia, who loved the beautiful Princess Zeb-un-Nissa for the thoughts she disclosed in her verses, once wrote to her, 'Though I bear your image in my mind, I would never permit my eyes to raise themselves to your face.' At another time he wrote asking her, 'What sort of love is yours that you do not unveil your beauty to me?' She answered, referring to the tale of Majnun and Leila, who are the Romeo and Juliet of the East, 'Though my heart is the heart of Majnun, yet I am of the sex of Leila; and though my sighs are deep, Hayya is a chain upon my feet.' The fame of her learning and beauty spread far and wide, but Zeb-un-Nissa never married. A poet, a philosopher, she lived absorbed in her own meditations and studies. She never saw her lover, although for long they exchanged verses in an intellectual interchange of thoughts on life, truth, and beauty.

After many years, he wrote in passionate longing to her, that if he could see her but once it would be to him a sacred vision; and in answer she sent a poem that said:

The nightingale would forget his song to the rose,  
If he saw Me walking in the garden.  
If the Brahmin saw My face,  
He would forget his idol.  
Whoever would find Me,  
Must look in My words;  
For I am hidden in My words,  
As the perfume in the petals of the flowers.

Thus she replied to his desire to see a sacred vision, describing the divine veiling of the divine Presence. Even in this way have



all those who touched the divine Life and caught sight of the divine Beauty spoken of their inspirations. Remember the words of Krishna who said, 'Whenever religion (*dharma*) is threatened, then am I born.'

In the veiling and unveiling of beauty lies every purpose of creation. The lover is first of all dependent upon seeing his beloved and upon her response to him. But there comes an evolution in his love that changes his whole outlook; and then his love rises above such earthly needs, and becomes independent and strong in itself. It is this independence that makes love secure and that shields love when faced with Hayya, the very defence of beauty. Love, grown thus strong and independent, becomes that inviolable loyalty to the ideal and that indestructible constancy which Zeb-un-Nissa thinks of when she sings:

If the beloved face thou canst not see  
 Within thy heart still cherish thy desire;  
 And if her love she will not grant to thee,  
 In thy love never tire.

Although her face be hidden from thy sight,  
 Within the sanctuary of thy heart  
 Still keep her image for thine own delight,  
 Hidden apart.

And if the Keeper of the Garden close  
 Before your face the inexorable gate,  
 O linger yet! The perfume of the rose  
 Will float to you, and find you as you wait  
 Not all disconsolate.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE AWAKENING OF YOUTH

THE Eastern poetic idea defines several stages in the approach of youth to maturity. In the first awakening of a liking, a fondness, a tenderness for one who is not of her sex, the girl is pictured as not thinking at all of expressing her feeling, but as trying to cover it even from her own consciousness. If there is a load of pain, she may let escape one cry. If there is a great admiration in her heart, the trembling of her lips says more than any word she utters. In the presence of her lover she is speechless, and the expression of her emotion reaches as far as her throat, to be instantly driven back into her heart again. The lowering of her eyes at the sight of her lover is the only sign that she consciously gives of her love, and though her face may light up, she draws back her hand if he touches it or would wish it to remain in his. She turns away her face if he offers a kiss, and her confusion when embraced tells of her youth.

And then comes a mysterious and exquisite time, which gives promise of that faithfulness from which springs the fulfilment of life. Then, with one direct look she expresses what a hundred of her words could not explain; and shy, though most shy when some other besides her lover is present, her gentle response to his advances would move even the dwellers in heaven. She gives freedom to her feelings and yet with reserve, with shyness, she yields and yet does not yield. She carries the thought of her lover in her heart day and night; when she is alone she is content to give herself up wholly to her interest in him. But since she does not feel clearly whether in doing this she does wrong or not, or should blame herself or not, she fights against such thoughts, without banishing them, all the time that the duties of the day keep her under the eyes of others. She tells even her closest companion and friend but little of her love, for she would hide it even after it is apparent to all. The grace of her perplexity is



winning, and with it she fans the fire in the heart of her lover.

Then follows a full awakening; and her glance falling on her lover is as an arrow; it pierces through his heart. Her kiss thrills him to the depth of his being, and her embrace holds intense joy for him. She is frank, sincere, and open; courageously she responds to him, desiring even to express her own emotions, as she gallantly faces the truth she has discovered. And thus comes the culmination of youth, where abides the fulfilment of love.

The development is undoubtedly the same in the youth of both sexes, but for various reasons it cannot be so distinctly traced in the growth of the boy's character. Moreover, it is the mind of the maiden that has been the poet's central theme and that has captivated his interest. There is something besides beauty, there is something more than a charming loveliness in the sight of youth that carries tenderness in the heart; and whether the beholder actually knows of the tenderness that youth feels or not, he cannot fail to see some effect of it. For love, like a flame, cannot fail to give out light.

And with the birth of a response to the fascination of the opposite sex comes the dawn of that ideal for the sake of which creation exists, and of that hope towards which the whole of creation is irresistibly drawn. As the Hindustani poet expresses it, 'It was the desire of finding an ideal love which brought me here upon earth; and this same desire of attaining the ideal is now taking me back whence I came.'

## CHAPTER IX

### COURTSHIP

#### i

COURTSHIP is the foundation upon which married life is erected. Real courtship is in all love that is directed towards an object with the hope of gaining it, and with constancy in the pursuit of it. Belief that the object will be attained some day, and confidence that the desire to attain will not weaken before it is fulfilled, is the spirit of true courtship.

One sees many cases where a young man or girl, from the desire to get all the pleasure possible, is happy with one friend in one season, and with the change of season changes the friend: a kind of restlessness that may increase to such an extent that youth, making merry, may seek a new companion or new face with whom to share every fresh enjoyment. Such as these know only of pleasures that pass, and remain in the same place where they were. And those who seek to recall the first springtime of emotion in many experiences, and so go from one love affair to another until they grow to be more interested in change than in anything else, lose sight of the real beauty of courtship and its real joy. Their loves that change so often make but little difference to them; and their hearts, which have suffered no wound since love has never fully touched them, remain unilluminated.

Then too often one sees that a young man or woman, perhaps from great cautiousness, or a fundamental lack of confidence or trust, will have several love affairs at a time, thinking to choose at last the one that may seem closest to his or her ideal. Although this way may prove successful up to a point, it certainly will prevent ultimate success in life. For love is the power that is the original cause of creation; it is the battery working behind the mechanism of the universe; and this original power is crippled in the individual when he attempts to divide it by directing it towards more than one whom he regards as possible objects of his love.



As to the effect of indecision upon others, changeableness on the part of a man seems usually to have more harmful results than changeableness on the part of a woman. Since a woman's position in life is the more delicate one, whether regarded from the moral, social, or physical point of view, there is more danger that the injury that a man inflicts upon her may prove irreparable. At the same time a woman is perhaps to be more censured than a man if she proves fickle and changeable, since she naturally possesses greater stability, especially in matters of the heart.

The man or woman who, out of cautiousness or for whatever reason, has more than one in view in courtship, is not able to give enough to anyone, nor take enough from anyone; he is unable to take for the very reason that he is unable to give. Think then what he loses! If he were able to see those ocean waves that move in his heart, the heart that is vaster than any sea, he would never be deluded into thinking that any price could be too great to pay for the loss of that emotion which comes in the intensity of love.

The right mate comes at the right time, and then indeed all cautious testings seem useless, crackling like straw. As soon as feeling is divided for the sake of any such reason as the testing of the beloved, it becomes a business; one can no longer speak of it as love. And as soon as one's feeling is divided for such a reason one begins to develop deception, and the emotions eventually become obscured by deception. There cannot, indeed, be any sincere love without single-mindedness, nor any fragrant love without sincerity.

A tendency is often seen in young people of wishing to arouse jealousy and of attempting to gain a deeper affection by showing the lover how much others admire them, and therefore how worthy of admiration they are. But these are the wrong tactics, for the current that should flow in a single stream is of necessity disturbed by such a manœuvre. A persistent lover will no doubt fight his battle on love's field to overcome his real or supposed rival; but after winning the battle the current of his love will be weakened and may be exhausted; usually indeed, on account of the conflict and strain sustained, it becomes so attenuated that at any moment the thread can break or wear through.

One also sees young people viewing courtship from a practical standpoint, thinking what practical benefit they may derive. Whether it is money or comfort or position they think of, it is the thing they are looking for that they love and not the person. However loving or affectionate a couple may appear, there can only be disappointment for one of them if their courtship is built on such a basis. For by an inner law of nature, if one of two friends is disappointed the other cannot be entirely happy.

When the stream of love flows in its full strength it purifies all that stands in its course, as the Ganges in the teachings of the ancients purifies all who plunge into its sacred waters. It is more than a wonder, more than interesting or beautiful, to see the devotion of a youth in the presence of the beloved. The pain of his longing in her absence, his effort to come to her, and his planning to communicate with her when there is no channel or means; and his imaginings, what he would like to tell her, how he would like to put it, all are washed away in that moment when he is face to face with her.

Sincere courtship is in itself a religion. Surely no religion can teach more than love can. When the beloved becomes so much the centre of life that the lover begins to lose his selfishness through thought for her; when he is so impressed by her beauty that no other beauty, no matter how great, can make him falter in his allegiance to her; when for her sake he becomes gentle and considerate; when he confesses to her what he would not have any one else on earth know; when his desires turn towards honesty and sincerity in all things, through his honesty and sincerity in love, is there not then something in his life greater than the religion that is merely taught? Has he not himself received a direct inspiration from heaven above? A lover thus inspired looks forward with the same hope to his future life with the beloved that the pious do to life in the hereafter. The meeting between two such lovers is nothing less than a divine communion, since God who is love, and was asleep in their hearts, is now awakened within them.



## ii

Many say, and rightly, that parents should have control in the love affairs of their children, for whose sake they have borne so many troubles and difficulties. And who could enumerate the sacrifices that parents willingly undergo to support their children and to protect them from all hardship? It is undoubtedly hard for any parent to find that the child who was once so helpless and dependent is no sooner grown than he wishes to take a step quite independently of anyone, and a step that will influence his whole future happiness. Besides, as they say in the East, youth is blind, and especially blind when love rises in the heart, covering reason with clouds of emotions, and sweeping away discretion in a storm of feeling. At such a moment it is a third person who can judge of the real state of affairs. Shall the place of this third person be denied to the parents who, in the majority of cases, live their youthful lives again in the youth of their children?

At the same time parents who separate their child from the beloved, whether by force or by influence, are in danger either of driving the child who is courageous and independent away from them altogether, or of crushing the heart of the weak one in such a way as to leave a pain there that is never forgotten. Many a girl comes in her disappointment to look upon her parents, once her friends, as her bitterest enemies. Parents and children live in such different worlds; the temperament, the outlook of the old is so strange to the young.

And is it really possible for any one being to take over the responsibility of the life of another? Can it really be thought that any soul has the right to control another soul by power or force? There is one control: affection, which is the only legitimate deterrent; but affection loses all happiness once it disregards freedom. Freedom of the self and freedom of the loved one, true affection can never lose sight of either. And whether it be through love of mother or father, or of the one who loves in courtship, once the freedom of the beloved has been hindered, a fault against love has been committed.

Where the attentions of love are not acceptable they should be

withdrawn; where the lover finds that the beloved is troubled by the expression of his love, or that the heart of the beloved is changed and bent in a new direction, so that his power is no longer able to keep it in the direction he wishes, then instead of causing harm to the beloved, let the lover (whether father, or mother, or whoever it be) cease to demand a response. He may perhaps become indifferent and erase his love; if so, good. But the real lover accepts the bowl of bitterness from the hands of the beloved as a draught that purifies and strengthens for life, knowing that crucifixion alone is the source of resurrection.



## CHAPTER X

### CHIVALRY

#### i

THERE is a story told of Sa'di, that chivalrous and most ideal of poets, that he loved a girl very dearly; he admired and valued her more than all else in his life, so that there was nothing that he would not do for her sake. One day coming to see her he found her, though he could scarcely believe his eyes, in the arms of another; but going away quietly he took his stand at the gateway of her house. When the other man saw Sa'di standing there he thought, 'Surely now, filled with jealousy he is waiting to kill me'. But Sa'di, as he saw him approach, called: 'Friend, be at peace. I am waiting to give you a word of good advice: that as I have seen and gone away quietly, so do you, if you should see her in the arms of another. For that is the way in which the wise love.'

*Ghayrat*, or chivalry, so often takes the form of jealousy that the one is usually confounded with the other. This same male tendency lies at the root of duelling, a custom not foreign to any part of the world, which down the ages has been the cause of every kind of conflict and upheaval. The honour of one may be the honour of another, or of ten, or a hundred others; and thus a woman's honour may be upheld as that of a king.

Man has always held woman to be most sacred in life; more precious to him and appealing more to him than all the rest of life. If she be his mother, he sees her as his source and creator, his only sustainer and protection; in heartbreak and disappointment and in the very depths of despair comes the thought of the mother, who was his first friend before anyone was attracted to him, and his first guardian and teacher. If she be his sister he thinks more of her than of himself, for her position in life is more delicate than his; she is the honour of his family, and he considers that he shares the responsibility of his parents for her. None of this goodness is

artificial; it is of the very essence of humanity, springing from the nature of things. To a father the responsibility of a daughter seems greater than that of a son; her dishonour or unhappiness strikes at him most keenly. And in that closest relationship of life, a word against a man's wife destroys his happiness and peace; he would accept any degradation to shield her; and this equally whether he be attached to a woman worthy of his ideal or to a prostitute, to one who has lost all sense of self-respect. In each relationship her honour is his own honour.

This male tendency is seen taking selfish and brutal forms in the social life of the community. For instance, when the responsibility that the birth of a daughter places upon the family has induced such a custom as the killing of female children at birth, a custom found in many different countries at different times; or when, as now in Western civilization, even among the wealthy, parents restrict their families and take means to prevent the birth of any child, male or female, through dread of responsibility. Again, the natural dependence of woman is often greatly increased by man; for so strong is the feeling that a man's responsibilities in life are greater than hers, since he bears hers as well as his own, that woman is deprived in order that he may have every advantage that offers. In order that he may be better fitted for his fight in the world, her natural disabilities are added to and increased.

One sees in the West that girls often receive less opportunity for education than their brothers; that daughters inherit a lesser portion than sons; that the work of women is paid at a lower rate than that of men. And in the East this male tendency is responsible for such customs as the seclusion of women. Thus everywhere, East or West, even if unexpressed, there exists this tendency to regard a woman as the honour and care of a man, and consequently as less dependent upon her own efforts than upon his.

It is the thought of individual freedom that is attacking the old ideals, and destroying also this ideal of Ghayrat, or chivalry; for in spite of the selfish, even brutal forms that it may take, it is an ideal; and he who follows it possesses a religion. In the West man accepts greater advantages of life without accepting corresponding responsibilities. The Hindu, with a less strong thought of individual liberty, still preserves many ancient ideals; and no



student of Hindu life can deny that these are as sacred to him as his worship of gods and goddesses, and are part of his Dharma or religion. If the Hindu once calls a woman sister, or daughter, or mother, he regards her as such all his life, through the sacred bond of his promise, and he feels in honour bound to protect and sustain her, though she may not be related to him in any way.

## ii

There is a feminine chivalry which the poets of Hindustan call *Naz*, a beauty that shines out if lighted by the deference of a man. It is a beauty that lies silent and hidden till an act of attention, of admiration, or respect on the part of a man stimulates the vanity in which it is rooted. Under courtesy and consideration it unfolds to a perfection that is shown in the woman's every action and feeling; in her words and deeds, smiles and tears, so that every one of them becomes filled with beauty. The value that a woman attaches to a man's small acts of courtesy is rarely understood by man, and it seems to him inexplicable and part of that mystery which he believes shrouds her from him. But there is no woman, no matter of what type or class, country or nation, in whom there is not this beauty which the courtesy of man alone discloses.

There is another kind of feminine chivalry which the poets call *Nayaz*. This tendency is seen expressing itself in the gallant and courageous response that a woman will make to her admirer; or it may express itself in a gentle, yielding forbearance towards him. It makes her lenient and forgiving to a man, modest and gracious. When he has a desire to protect and to help her, it is a gentle chivalry on her part that makes her put herself, as it were, into his hands. She gives him that trust which he wants her to place in him, and accepts his attentions, just because he so desires her to trust him and to receive his care or homage. It is her chivalry which constrains her to value male chivalry and hold it precious.

And there is yet another kind of feminine chivalry: *Nakhra*, which is the radiance and beauty that man recognizes as feminine. When a woman possesses this quality, nothing can hide it; it shines out unwavering and undimmed, natural, without self-consciousness. No effort on a man's part is needed to disclose it;

nor on the other hand is it the result of any conscious effort of her own. In it there is no pointing with a dart, no aiming with an arrow, towards some target of admiration or reward. It lies in her simple and unaffected recognition of a certain part of life as her kingdom, over which she is by right a queen, and where she reigns with consideration towards those dependent upon her. That is the very essence of aristocracy and chivalry.

No situation in life can extinguish this natural beauty; and it may be seen shining in the unconscious movements, in the unclouded gaiety and sunniness, and in the intelligence of a maiden who is as yet untouched by any burden of life. It is a queenliness, a womanliness that irradiates its possessor at every step of her journey through life; and more than any other human quality it wins the heart of man.



## CHAPTER XI

# MARRIAGE

### i

MARRIAGE is from nature, and is simply an attachment. Some see a great significance in marriage, believing that couples are born and made for each other. Others believe that this attachment is but the outcome of the nearness of two individuals to each other, which, developing, leads them to form a partnership.

Actually one sees marriages which illustrate both these ideas. The first may be seen operating in the vegetable kingdom; it may be traced in the position of two leaves on the same stem, one balancing the other and responding to the other. The second may be seen ruling in the animal world, where mates become attached to each other through propinquity, until something comes to disturb their lives together; and then, absent from one another, they forget each other and readily accept a new mate.

But man always has something of sincerity and faithfulness in his nature. Though he lives his life in a changing scene he values steadiness and constancy; the origin of his soul is indeed that one and eternal Spirit which does not change. And it is this human tendency to constancy that has helped to bring about the recognition of the attachment between man and woman, a recognition that has developed into the many and varied institutions of marriage. For the human pair so attached have wished to think of themselves as united in a desire for constancy; and they have also wished others to look upon them as a couple joined in a constant partnership.

The idea that an individual man or woman has been created the one for the other is found among all races at all times. It rests on common human experience. One often sees an individual, possessed of a desire to marry, who makes many friends without becoming attached to anyone; it seems as if he were groping towards his own mate who is destined for him, and cannot rest

until he finds her. And again one sees two who have met many others without forming any real attachment, but who upon meeting instantly feel united, as if they had been made for each other.

One sees that all creation is aiming at perfection. Every atom is working to fit into its proper place; and either it attracts or else it is attracted to the fulfilment of that perfection which is the reason for its existence. All the different particles of an object are in time brought together; no matter how scattered, eventually they meet; this is the secret underlying existence. And the coming together of a man and woman who see their attachment to each other as something as sacred as religion, is true union; the hope with which they look for their partnership to endure in unbroken constancy makes theirs a real marriage; and in this ideal is found the perfection of human life.

But this natural, sacred union is influenced from both sides in the modern State: on the one side by the Church, and on the other side by the law. Marriage has degenerated into a business affair, advertised on all sides as subservient to ideas of material profit and advantage. It is even suggested now that an external authority shall decide whether a couple be physically fitted to marry, so that the liberty to make even this decision may be taken out of their own hands.

And once they are bound together, the laws of the Church keep a couple bound together whether the attachment proves to be real and sincere or not, making them captives for life; so that often the promise taken in the Church service is the only tie that remains, and it becomes a lock that secures the imprisonment of two lives. Having no joy in their union a couple, mutually willing to part, may be thus debarred from experiencing the joy of a real marriage within their Church. And the social law stands ready to enforce captivity and to inflict punishment should they break their imprisonment; and thus prevents them from following that sacred path of real attachment which leads to perfection of life. For marriage is neither a religious ritual nor a business contract, though the attitude of the Church makes it appear as the one, and the State as the other.

The free-thinker, revolted by the purely formal marriage, goes



to the opposite extreme, advocating what he calls free love. This ideal of free love, by which man and woman have entire freedom in marriage and divorce without reference to Church or State, will be practicable and possible when all the children of the community are equally under the care of the whole community. Nevertheless, for the individual to have this freedom without a spiritual ideal of life would prove a curse. For it must be acknowledged that the world, which is progressing in many directions, is weakening in others; and every day shows a weakening in the regard for purely spiritual ideas, such as are necessary in the democracy taught by the greatest teachers of humanity.

If the spirit of freedom becomes destructive it loses the essence of democracy. The true democrat says, 'There is no one to whom I, in my humanity, will yield as to a superior'; but he also says, 'there is no one among humanity whom I dare to despise or injure'. Until that far-off day arrives when freedom exists everywhere alike for the strong or the weak, untainted by any spirit of intolerance, there must be safeguards to ensure order in the community. Until that day marriage, or the formal recognition of the human attachment, will be necessary, not only in order that the interests of the children may be safeguarded, but so that woman, who has neither in the East nor in the West that recognition which makes her socially as independent as her mate, and whose position in life from every point of view is consequently a more delicate one than his, shall not suffer unjustly.

## ii

A Turkish father heard that his son was continually absent on long visits to a country place, and ordered him to give up these journeys and to remain strictly at his studies. He was a man of influence and position, and his son, from fear of him, fell in with his wishes. But later, hearing that his son had involved himself in an affair with a woman in that country place, the father sent him back to her, saying, 'How otherwise shall I feel secure that my own daughter will meet with honesty and sincerity?' Here there was no covering up of the truth for material convenience although it would certainly have been easier to repudiate the

woman, and to make a virtue out of convenience; and there was no insincere adherence to an external standard of morality, nor any dishonest attempt to enforce an ideal of monogamy upon a mind incapable of sustaining it.

The English law of breach of promise was framed to protect women; but does anyone really imagine that there are now in England, owing to this law, fewer tragedies of the kind where innocent and sincere women have been betrayed? The really sincere woman is silent before treachery of this kind as before death, feeling herself to be in the presence of something against which she is powerless.

The average man is apt to look with awe upon the social laws which govern his community, as if these laws were of divine ordinance. He forgets that they are simply means devised for the most part by the average among his fellow-men, to keep order; and that they can often be traced to a materialistic point of view, directly opposite to the divine spirit of the teacher whom he professes to follow as his religious lord and guide.

Every individual has a certain motive in his life. The higher his motive, the greater the current of thought or feeling that streams from him towards it. If two mates are drawn by the same motive, they advance through life together; but if it is not so, then life may be like swimming against the tide for each of them.

Before marriage it is hope that keeps love alive. Acquaintance, friendship, courtship are deepening stages through which hope leads the human being to that partnership called marriage. After marriage life's progress may become difficult, unless life presents a new scope and a new avenue for hope. Hope may centre round the children; and yet that is not enough. There must be some incentive to stimulate each partner to progress along the path of life, and this is best given by each to the other when a common interest makes them share both joy and sorrow together, their gaze centred on the same aim.

Where there is no common interest or aim or ambition, harmony may still exist if each has an ideal of his responsibilities to the other as a human being; it is indeed through the lack of this ideal that life breaks into pieces. And it is truly noble on the part of a couple when, through miseries and difficulties, they always



have regard to the sacredness of the tie that connects them.

Nature is such that no two things are created alike; and the human being cannot expect his or her mate, whom nature made, to be as docile and flexible as that creature whom his imagination alone conceives. To make a friend forgiveness is required which burns up all things, leaving only beauty; but to destroy friendship is easy.

## CHAPTER XII

### BEAUTY

#### i

IT IS SAID that in the East woman has been dominated by man; but from the Eastern point of view she can never be dominated by him. She is not only the ideal of nature's beauty, she is also the guardian of human beauty. And she has therefore been considered in the East as one enshrined and worthy to be guarded from the strife of the world which man, more roughly made, can more easily bear.

Regarding the most responsible purpose of her life, Zoroastrians, Brahmins, and many sects of Hindus have from of old apportioned regular days of rest, even from household duties, for servants and mistress alike. And there is a widespread belief in the East that if an expectant mother comes to see many different types of faces, sometimes degrading and ugly, and to deal with many natures, the cruel, the unkind, the bitter, that the desired image, designed by nature's pen in her womb, must be disturbed and altered. Therefore she is guarded with care which endeavours to shelter her from every ugliness, and to surround her only with sympathy, gentleness, and beauty. It is true that this ideal of consideration does develop into many tyrannies and fettering superstitions; but in Eastern eyes these tyrannies do not seem so hypocritical or hard as those to be seen in modern Europe, where woman with seeming personal freedom fights equally with men in the open market of life, and yet always unequally, hampered still by artificial handicaps invented by men.

Man all the world over has a desire to be the first to possess the woman who is to be the mother of his children; and this desire is rooted in the belief that the image and personality of the first man by whom a woman conceives will perhaps reflect itself in all her children. This is really a belief in the power of mental impressions, though perhaps not always consciously held. Breeders of



animals in all countries point to cases in support of the idea that if a female is mated with a male of inferior breed, or one with a peculiarity, there can be no certainty that her offspring by other sires will not be tainted by the inferiority of the first mate. These beliefs and instances point to the fact that the female conceives mentally as well as physically, and that a strong mental impression may well prove indelible.

And though the modern scientific view denies that mental impressions and emotions have much effect upon the physical body, pointing, for instance, to the malformation of a head or skull, and giving this as the reason for defective mentality or insanity, the Eastern philosopher will still ask which defect showed itself first; was it the mental or the physical defect?

The history and the resulting psychology of every people are so different, that it is impossible for one race to see or judge the evolved customs of another from their own point of view. Man sometimes points with surprise to the deep tenderness and admiration for woman, to the despair at her loss, and to sentiments of the most beautiful loyalty to the beloved, which inspire the songs of even the wilder and less literary peoples of the world; a surprise that itself occasions surprise.

The Hindu worships Krishna by the side of his consort, and admires most of all that ideal of care and consideration of which we have spoken. The follower of Islam points out that every woman in Islam retains her own name after marriage, which shows that she stands as a responsible individual both in the home and outside it. He will remember also that the Prophet always upheld the ideal of womanhood, making his followers swear in their oath of allegiance to him to speak no evil of woman; and asking women themselves to show dignity by their clothing and manner. He who felt so keenly the degeneration of his people, in his campaign for reform first struck at the degradation to which the brutality of men subjects woman. And the follower of Islam reflects also on the long gallery of women who would surely have fallen victims to superstition for their unusual talents, and been killed as 'witches' or 'servants of the devil', had they lived in the same periods in Christian countries, but who shine like

stars in the annals of the history of Islam on account of their intellectual accomplishments or spiritual attainment. Each country defends its own ideal of woman as being the highest; and to each country there belong its peculiar tyrannies, which are but different aspects of the same blind tendencies of humanity.

There is a story told in the East of how a king was debating with his philosophers and friends on the question of wherein beauty lies. As they were talking together on the terrace of the palace they watched their children playing below in the courtyard. Suddenly the king called to the slave of the courtyard and, handing him a jewelled cap, said 'Now take this and put it on the head of the child whose beauty seems to you to suit it best; choose and crown the most beautiful of all those playing down there'. The slave, a little embarrassed, but pleased and interested, took the jewelled cap most carefully. First he tried it on the king's son; he saw that it suited the handsome lad and yet, somehow the slave was not quite satisfied; there seemed to him something lacking about the child and he tried it on the head of another, and another, till at last he put it on his own little son. There he saw that the cap fitted his child exactly; it became him wonderfully; it was just the right cap for him. So the slave took his son by the hand, and leading him to the king, and trembling a little with fear said, 'Sire, of all the children, I find that the crown suits this one best of all. Indeed if I tell the truth I must say this, though I am ashamed to appear so bold; for indeed the boy is the son of my most unworthy self.'

Then the king and those with him laughed very heartily as he thanked the slave, and rewarded him with the same cap for his child, and said, 'Certainly you have told me what I wished to know; it is the heart that perceives beauty'. For the son of this negro slave was indeed a very ugly child, as the king and all those with him saw at a glance.

Ideals are made by the diverse imaginations of men, and therefore ideals differ; but to hold the ideal is the work of the heart, that unchanging heart which contains reason and is greater than reason, even as a hand is greater than one of its fingers.



The Venus of Milo, that statue whose beauty transcends the boundaries of nations, compelling the admiration of totally different schools of art, suggests that the beauty of women conquers without arms.

There is nothing for which a man will so blindly sacrifice all he possesses as for the woman he loves. He can be seen discarding his standards of thought and understanding, his family and friends, and his position for the sake of her whom he loves. And one feels that Adam must gladly have left paradise, if Eve did but smile and say it was her pleasure to walk on earth.

Woman's beauty touches man more than all other beauty. The colours, the delicacy, and fragrance of flowers, the radiance and light of jewels, are but a background for her. It seems to him that all nature was created to prepare for her being. And he finds no subject so beautiful for his art as a beautiful rendering of two youthful human figures, male and female.

But how shall he describe her whom he loves? For when he is conscious of beauty, it is then that he closes his lips.

As the ocean cannot be emptied into a vessel made by human hands, so beauty cannot be captured within the limits of human definitions. There is the beauty of the pine tree, a beauty of straightness and uprightness; and again there is the beauty of the sweeping branches of the willow. Or again a curve added to the beauty of steadiness of form sometimes doubles that loveliness. What can explain this diversity? Beauty of movement, of gesture, of feature, of expression, of voice, all escape explanation, which is indeed but a limited thing.

How calmly the mountains and hills seem to be waiting for some day that is to come; if you go near to them and listen they seem to tell you this. How eagerly the trees and plants seem to be expecting some day, some hour; the hour that shall be the fulfilment of their desire. The same desire, intense and pronounced, is still seen in birds and in animals; but its fulfilment is in man. The same aspiration which works through all aspects of life and has brought forth such varying fruits culminates in humanity, and prepares through humanity a path that reaches up to the height called divinity, which is the perfection of beauty.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PASSION

WHEN one considers the nature of passion, one sees that it is life itself; it is energy taking substantial form and expressing itself through different channels and outlets. Different desires such as speaking, singing, dancing, laughing, crying, fighting, wrestling, boxing, are different expressions of the same energy, whose central or final expression takes place in the passion between the sexes.

Passion is seen in the groups made by speaker and listener, or thinker and receiver, or actor and spectator, but it appears most vital and strong in the love of the lover and the response of the beloved. The passion of the poet is in his poetry; the passion of the musician composes melody; the passion of the actor declaims his part. The act of creation, in no matter what aspect, is the play of passion, whose source and root is love alone; for as man without humanity is empty, and as the body without spirit is dead, so passion without love is energy that is devoid of beauty and blind.

Passion is the desire of love. Passion is the expression of love and it is the satisfaction of love. It is no exaggeration to say that passion is the end of love; for the purpose of love is fulfilled by passion. Man's life is composed of many lives, and the circle of each is completed when the passion that inspires each is satisfied.

All things in life have a purpose; the purpose of some is known, and of others unknown. And beyond life and beneath life exists that activity which the limited mind cannot comprehend. But so far as human understanding can probe, it can discover nothing of greater purpose and value to the world than passion. Under that covering is hidden the hand of the creator.

In all aspects of life, through the animal kingdom to humanity, it is the only source and cause of generation; and that of itself discloses to the thinker its importance. The great teachers of humanity have therefore wished man to look upon every expression of passion as sacred; and as most sacred of all that passion



which exists in the love of the sexes for each other. The desire to make sex passion a most sacred thing is seen in the teaching of Shiva; and the origin of phallic worship lay in the desire to raise in the sight of humanity the sacredness of passion, and to free it from the shame and contempt with which men viewed it.

The desire of the ear to hear clearly shows itself when one is unable to listen owing to a disturbing noise. Then the passion of hearing is not satisfied and man becomes confused; he will beg others to keep quiet a moment, or if weak he will lose his temper if he is not allowed to listen to what he wishes to hear at the moment. When one smells a thing there comes a desire to smell it until one knows what it is, until one can fully understand and appreciate the smell. And so also with taste; the taste of a delicious dish tempts man at once to taste more, to enjoy it fully.

The sight of beauty gives man desire to see into its depths, until his sight is satisfied. In the average man the passion of touch is, however, the most intense form of sense; for through this sense consciousness comes to the surface. The comfort of soft clothing, of easy chairs, of warmth in winter, of coolness in summer, of the freshness of the bath, is conveyed to a man through his sense of touch. Indeed, most of his pleasures are dependent upon it, and this sense reaches its culmination in the passion of the body for one of the opposite sex. But it is not only the sense of touch that is energized to its very centre in sex passion; every sense is then awake, and therefore it is that sex passion moves mankind more than anything else in the world.

In each different aspect of joy a different plane of existence is reached, but in sex passion all planes of existence are in motion. When accumulated energy is expressed in the abstract through feeling, it comes as laughter or tears, anger, affection, fear, or sympathy. Energy expressed through the mind comes as speech or thought; and expressed through the body as action. But the expression of intense affection towards the opposite sex brings the whole being to the surface. Consciousness which in other experiences becomes but partially external, remaining mostly within, is brought entirely to the surface by sex passion alone. It is because of this that spiritually-minded people have abstained from sex passion and religious people have considered it degrading. For

the soul-consciousness is thus brought outside instead of being preserved within, and the soul is thus brought to earth although its destination is, so to speak, heaven.

But if this world is the work of a Creator, it has been created so that He might experience external life. In other words the knowing aspect of life has wished to know the knowable part of life; and its joy depended upon knowing, which alone comes through experience. Moreover its evolution and development depend on the inspiration which is brought by experience alone. And inasmuch as it is necessary for the knowing aspect of life, or the soul, to return at length to its original state of being, even so it is necessary for it to experience first of all the life it created for the very reason that it might know.



## CHAPTER XIV

### CELIBACY

#### i

IN ALL ages celibacy has been a religious and mystical ideal, and for two principal reasons. The first is that although the soul born into the world is led further astray by every fresh experience in life, nevertheless it is sex passion that causes the greatest delusion of all. The myth of Adam and Eve illustrates this truth; for whether it was a means taken by God or by Satan, it was at the hands of Eve that Adam ate the forbidden fruit, and not through any direct command or prompting that he himself received. And since man's final goal is the attainment of spiritual life, his life here on earth having been all in vain if he fails to achieve it, every effort has been made by religion to draw him away from that passion of sex towards which he is led by nature, and thus away from the greatest peril that his soul can encounter on its earthly journey.

And then again, whilst every expression of life, speech, laughter, tears, robs man of some part of his fund of energy, it is sex passion that makes the greatest demand of all; and therefore the idea of celibacy was presented, so that man might the better preserve his energy to pursue with singleness of vision that final goal of spiritual attainment.

Losses such as dimness of reason, weakness of thought, loss of memory, despair, depression, result when the inner being of man is starved because energy has been expended, and because there is no knowledge or skill in strengthening and sustaining the inner existence. At every moment of life and with every breath, the human being gives out and takes in energy; and whenever he gives out more than he takes in, he draws death nearer. But if energy is denied an outlet, it can be raised and used to sustain the mind and the inner being. For this reason mystics have often practised seclusion, silence, and other forms of abstinence, to

preserve energy for the sustenance of the inner life; and they have found that celibacy was the most effectual means of all upon this path. 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.'

But man's life can never be complete without woman, and this is the error that lies at the root of the ideal of celibacy. Man's life is incomplete without woman, whether one considers his social or his political life; and this is no less true if one considers his religious and his spiritual life. Without the sympathy of Christ for Mary Magdalene, and the closeness of the friendship of Christ with Martha and her sister Mary, the beautiful picture of the Master's life would be incomplete. Among the prophets of the Semitic races, from Abraham down through the ages, there was always a woman to complete the course of their holy lives; and the great Hindu teachers from Brahma to Krishna are glorified together with their consorts.

Religious man, wherever found and whatever teacher he followed, has nevertheless been prone to look at contact with woman with contempt, with the thought of there being something unholy in the passionate love of woman. Indeed it is a question whether the libertine has actually debased woman as much as the religious man, who believes that to hold himself aloof from any woman with contempt and to strangle his love within him, will be for his own spiritual benefit. And is it possible to debase woman and the position of woman in the scheme of life without debasing man and the whole of life?

In the evolution of the ego there is undoubtedly a development towards celibacy, but at the same time this development carries an increasing regard for woman, and the whole plan of life. Oriental philosophy, in discussing the ego, distinguishes between the *Nafs-e-Ammara* and the *Nafs-e-Lawwama*. The former is the individual whose whole existence is on the surface, engaged in the satisfaction of his senses in eating, drinking, in amusements, and in sexual indulgence; and the *Nafs-e-Lawwama* is the individual whose physical greed is controlled by intelligence, to the extent of making him discriminate between his pleasures. The *Nafs-e-Lawwama* rejects those desires and enjoyments that fall below a certain standard of taste which his intelligence sets for him.



The *Nafs-e-Mutmaina* represents a third and higher stage of development, in which the senses are under the control of mind. In this stage of evolution a man is absorbed in some ideal, or devoted to the achievement of some object in life, outside of self—art, invention, trade, and so on—and directs his energies into one channel. In his sexual passion he may be compared with the deer that comes to drink from the pool of fresh water lying hidden in the depth of the forest pure and untroubled, to be frightened away by the least flutter of reflected shade that disturbs or distracts his attention. For him passion only exists when he loves; he cannot feel passionate when he does not love. Here at last is found the admiration of woman, the beginning of love, and the real lover. What do the *Nafs-e-Ammara* or *Lawwama* know, who think of love as a pleasure?

The furthest stage in development is the *Nafs-e-Salima*, in which man's consciousness is removed to an abstract plane. In the heart of a man at this point of evolution, love is raised from admiration to worship; his love is part of his being, and his passion, which is never expressed except in the intensity of love, may be compared to the alighting of a bird on earth to pick up a grain of corn. This man lives on a higher plane of life, judging by different standards, though his inspiration springs from the common life of existence. Thinker, visionary, or man of action, he becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the essence of things. He alone becomes unable to regard anything as common or unclean; although in his contemplation of the mystery of life, his devotion to the pursuit of truth, and his self-sacrifice to the cause of humanity, he may become gradually etherealized above every material object. Having reached this point he is truly justified if he should strike the path of celibacy.

## ii

The story of Princess Mira Bai is the story of a *Nafs-e-Salima* united to a *Nafs-e-Ammara*. Mira Bai was married to the Rana of Udaipur, but soon her tastes in life developed very differently from his. He, always given up to the pleasures of hunting and shooting, to the giving of great entertainments, to shows of

dancing and acting, began shortly after his marriage to be irritated and vexed by the attitude of Mira Bai towards his amusements. For she was not really interested in any of these things and gradually ceased to show any delight in them; and her mind began to be attracted to quite other aspects of life, to considering the lot of her servants and of the poor in the kingdom, and to philosophy and poetry.

At last the Rana, in unreasonable anger at her growing absorption in thoughts and questions that were foreign to his nature, refused to see her or to treat her with the dignity due to her in his court. Mira Bai took these insults calmly and patiently, with her accustomed sweetness and gentleness, and withdrew to a temple where she began to devote herself entirely to the study of philosophy and religion, and to the care of the poor and unfortunate.

The beauty of her hymns of praise, the music of the poetry that she composed and sang in her worship of the Divine became gradually famed throughout the kingdom of Udaipur; and on account of her great piety and learning many were drawn to the temple where she dwelt. At length her fame reached the court of the Emperor Akbar; and he, entirely won by the thoughts and the sweet verses of her songs that were repeated to him, decided that he himself would make a pilgrimage to see her. And so, in the guise of beggars, he set out with Tansen, the divinely inspired musician, learned in the mystery of sound as was Orpheus among the Greeks.

After they had entered the temple unknown to anyone and had heard Mira Bai, so moved were they by her music and poetry that Akbar with gratitude and veneration presented to her a most precious necklace; and this necklace Mira Bai took and hung round the neck of the idol of Krishna in the temple, regarded by her as the symbol of the Most Divine.

After that the precious necklace was seen by everyone in the temple; and gradually it became clear that it was Akbar himself who had given it. When the Rana of Udaipur heard of this visit and this gift he felt deeply insulted, and in great anger ordered Mira Bai to leave his kingdom. So she left the temple and his kingdom and went to Dwarka, where she spent the remainder



of her life in seclusion; and from there her fame spread to the boundaries of the empire, and her hymns became loved and were sung not only by her own people but by all the peoples of India.

It is difficult to translate the lyric sweetness of her verse; and the following version of one of her songs does not attempt to do more than give its substance:

My Beloved is One alone;  
Everywhere my eyes see Him only.

In search of love, I came to this world,  
But after seeing the world I wept,  
For I felt coldness on all sides,  
And I cried out in despair, 'Must I too  
become cold?'

And with tears, tears, tears,  
I nurtured that plant of tenderness  
Which I had almost lost within my heart.

Putting reason in the churn of love,  
I churned and churned.  
Then I took the butter for myself;  
Now, let him who likes take that milk.  
For I have attained what I so desired,  
I have found my hope.

No longer do I need your philosophies and faiths;  
Nothing to me your theories and creeds;  
For I have my Beloved.

He, upon whose head the crown of the universe  
is set,  
Is my Beloved.  
Krishna is my Lord;  
To Him I am faithful,  
Let happen what happens!

My Beloved is One alone;  
Save Him I know none.

## CHAPTER XV

### MONOGAMY

#### i

ANY study of psychology shows that success and happiness in life are found in singleness of mind. To focus itself the mind takes a single direction; and singleness of vision cannot fail to develop singleness of purpose. Many are the paths that lead to success; the difficulty lies in keeping strictly to the chosen path, or in other words in retaining singleness of mind. There is one means only by which man can attain to a realization of the religious ideal of the Godhead, and that is through sincerity and single-mindedness in the conduct of everyday life.

So it is that the ideal of monogamy has been considered by the wise as no less sacred than religion. In this ideal, verily, is found the natural law of religion.

Even among polygamous peoples monogamy prevails; because the one who is bound to several in marriage is most often devoted to one alone, and thus monogamy is in a sense more natural than polygamy. It is a tendency that is seen to a certain extent in birds and beasts. Doves, for instance, when mated remain attached to each other and share equally the responsibility of rearing their young. Many other animals always keep to one mate, and only after long separation, when they have lost consciousness of each other, will they accept a second mate. Such loyalty among animals is always a source of interest to man, and is in itself significant.

Once in India a man out hunting killed a bird, and saw as it fell to the ground that its mate flew down seeking after it; and when he came near to take his prey he found the mate dead beside it. So impressed was he by the sight of the lifeless body lying beside its slaughtered mate, that he never again went shooting. Constancy never fails to impress by its beauty.

In testing gold we recognize the real gold by its enduring



qualities. The real gold lasts; and what the human being calls divine in character is something that is enduring in its beauty, and thus different, distinct, and apart from the world which is ever changing.

The value of the things of life lies in the worth that man attaches to them; of themselves they have no value. There is a time when toys are treasures; but the child who cries for a toy comes to an age when he gives it away. And at every step in a man's evolution the values of power and position and wealth change in his eyes. And so as he evolves there arises in him a spirit of renunciation which may be called the Spirit of God. Gradually he recognizes the real value of those fair and lovely qualities of the spirit that change not. In the ideal of monogamy, in the ideal of devotion to one alone, abides a recognition of loyalty and constancy as being the most valuable, as being the divine attribute of man.

To the poet, to the artist, whatever be his art, to the idealist, the idea of the one beloved is part of his being. With selfless sincerity he is faithful to his vision of beauty; and every thought that tempts him from his loyalty is to him like going astray. No social law or moral teaching is needed to chain him to his beloved; his inward impulse keeps him to her.

It has been no uncommon thing to find in any age, in any country, cases where a bereaved mate has been unable to live on after the death of the beloved. Most often one sees the bereaved one of a true union living a dead life, suffering a long drawn-out crucifixion, till death terminates the enforced separation. Among the Hindus, that most idealistic of races, marriage gives a sacred position to the wife, so that she is, ideally, entirely dependent upon her husband to fight every battle of life for her; and to them the thought that a wife could marry a second time seems intolerable. Such stories of fidelity became so honoured amongst the Hindus as to make *Sati* a custom, and it became usual for Hindu women to imitate in their own lives the stories of great devotion, and by dying on their husband's grave to give thus the greatest proof of loyalty.

## ii

There is a story told about the wife of Jayadev, the poet of the Sanskrit age whose *Ashtapadis* have been sung for centuries with unfailing interest. The story tells that Jayadev's wife visited the court of the queen to offer sympathy according to custom, after the queen's sister had died in Sati. Jayadev's wife remained silent before the queen, who began to feel insulted that she did not express admiration for the great ideal that her sister had shown, or condole with her for her own loss. 'Does it not seem to you a great and noble proof of love?' asked the queen. 'Indeed, yes . . . ' answered Jayadev's wife, but she seemed to hesitate as if she had no words and the queen kept this in her mind.

Some time later the king happened to be away with Jayadev on a tiger-hunt; and the queen sent word to his wife to say that the poet had died on the expedition. 'What?' said she, 'Is Jayadev dead?' and she sank unconscious, and never recovering consciousness thus died.

For a youth to prefer death to dishonour is a great and generous ideal, but when this ideal becomes a custom, then the ideal has become an idol. It seems more terrible than the custom of Sati that a young man should kill himself for an ideal at the very threshold of life. But indeed that the human being should hold life cheap in comparison with his ideal has nothing of terror or horror in it; the horror begins when custom enforces such a sacrifice upon the individual who cannot understand or willingly accept it.

The joy or devotion to one alone, the joy of loving someone so much as to feel entirely loyal and true, is such that it cannot be compared in its fulness to any other in life. It is a joy that cannot be known except to the pious in the path of love. The virtue of this plant of truth and constancy reared in the heart spreads through its branches into each part of life in ever-springing virtues that are constantly blossoming and bearing the fruits of every happiness and blessing.

There is a verse of Hafiz which says, 'My heart is so pure in its love for you, that indeed it shows no purity; for save you it loves



no one.' The apparent confusion of this thought lies in this: that to love sincerely one cannot love more than one; and yet love must grow, for to cease to grow means but to wither and to die.

And to love one alone, and that one truly, is to expand and respond to all the beauty of life. The real lover laughs at him who says, 'I have loved, but my beloved failed me and therefore I love no more.' The real lover, like Aladdin, has his magic lamp, and he creates his vision of beauty. The real lover cries like Majnun, 'To see the beloved you must have my eyes.' He says, 'O you who blame, you who despair, and you who hate, cannot see.'

An English poet, writing of the sun, has said:

When the sun begins to spread his rays  
He shows his face ten thousand ways;  
Ten thousand things do then begin  
To show the life that they are in.

and the poet Shams-e Tabrèz has written:

When the sun showed his face  
Then appeared the faces of the forms of all worlds;  
His beauty showed their beauty;  
In his brightness they shone out;  
So by his rays we saw, and knew, and named them.

A flame of pure and sincere love is as a torch upon the path of the lover. It reveals to him the mysteries of life, as it awakens the answering gleam of light, the soul, in each created thing.

## CHAPTER XVI

### POLYGAMY

#### i

MONOGAMY and polygamy depend upon temperament. A monogamous temperament could never be otherwise than monogamous. And there are temperaments that will always have a tendency towards polygamy; no matter how happily placed in life, or how carefully guarded, these naturally seek variety of experience in sex.

In the lower animal creation, the polygamous temperament is seen to predominate. There one male has a number of females. One male is capable of procreation through a number of females, and in this respect man is no exception.

To permit polygamy is simply to recognize a natural human tendency with frankness. But to permit polygamy does not in any way mean the same as to enjoin polygamy. Mohammad, for instance, advised many temperaments that they should marry one woman only.

To permit polygamy does not mean, either, an interference with the ideal of monogamy, and it certainly need not tend to bring about a decrease in the number of perfectly mated monogamous lives. Among Muslims really monogamous lives are no rarer than among other communities that wish to maintain an appearance of conforming to a more artificial standard of morals. It would not, for instance, be difficult to find Muslim families where the men have been definitely monogamous over a period of four or five generations.

Since the male represents strength and power, his life is not only hazarded in the wars and battles that have existed in all ages, but is also risked in the adventurous sports and dangerous occupations of peace. There is consequently in all communities a greater loss of life in the male than in the female population. Under this disparity of numbers it is a question how far it is a virtue to enforce



a system that robs a large number of women of their natural rights, without leaving them any choice in the matter. If it be a virtue it none the less means a loss of members to the community. Actually the average individual does not keep with honesty to such a standard, and so loses the opportunity of procreation without restraining passion. Thus morals are undermined, and prostitution encouraged.

In Afghanistan, which is considered backward in progress by the East, but where polygamy, being a natural tendency, is recognized both by law and religion, there are few instances of sexual crime; prostitution is practically unknown and there are no foundling children.

There are again cases when polygamy from every reasonable point of view seems a necessity; in a marriage, for instance, where the wife is insane, or diseased, or childless. And besides these physical reasons there are intellectual reasons. Looking into life one sees men unlike in all things. Perhaps one man is equal in his physical strength to ten average men; another is intellectually a giant among his fellows. In Sanskrit *Mana* means mind; and the real man is mind. One mind may be equal to a thousand minds. One mind may have innumerable sides, each eager for expression. One mind may be capable of managing innumerable activities, and of supporting innumerable interests.

It was the custom in a country where the people lived by agriculture, that each man should receive as his portion a certain plot of land. Some availed themselves of the privilege and others disregarded their inheritance. Now one man, a good husbandman, saw a field lying untouched and unclaimed, and he passionately desired it; he knew that by his labour it could become a fair and beautiful place. And going to the ruler of his country, he demanded of him this field he had found lying waste and unclaimed.

The ruler replied, 'You are a good husbandman; you have in no wise neglected that which you have; and for myself I feel grieved that this goodly field that you have seen should lie overlooked. For it is my desire that my land should be a happy and rich country, and that every part of it should be filled with prosperity. But if I should grant to you this portion, what restraint

could I have over other dishonest and neglectful husbandmen? For it is rare to find a man such as yourself. For the most part the husbandmen are slothful and thriftless, thieving and dishonest, scarcely worthy to keep that possession and that liberty which they already have, but ready at all times to snatch at what is not theirs by right.'

'But', said that good husbandman to the ruler, 'if a portion of land remains unclaimed, weeds will grow and all manner of harmful things may breed there; so there is a double loss to your country, for these harmful things spread to other enclosed and cultivated places, and the seeds of the weeds are blown everywhere by the wind.'

'This I know well,' said the ruler of the country, 'but it is my duty to make my laws having regard to the worst of my subjects.'

It is the lawless, the degenerate, and the mentally incapable who breed and multiply under a system of enforced monogamy; while families that have inherited talent and position are weakened by every kind of artificial restraint, and their unmarried womenfolk in tens of thousands lead artificial lives with natural instincts repressed by conventions of education, law, and religion.

It is not unusual for travellers from the West to comment with a kind of contempt upon the swarming poorer populations of Eastern towns. But it will never be easy for Western missionaries to turn the educated Eastern men and women to their views of civilization once these have seen the teeming streets and slums of European towns, where dirt, disease, and drunkenness have so degraded humanity. And not only in the slums of the West does one see violence done to human nature, but there are vast sections of humanity whose lives can be called little else but lives of slavery, who are caught and wedged in the wheels of a civilization that crushes and destroys so much beauty of ideal, of personal freedom and expression. Nature is adaptable, and the individual is not always fully conscious of his loss; and therefore not being fully conscious of it, suffers but slightly. The loss of the individual is none the less felt in its entirety by the whole of society. While such things exist under one scheme of civilization, that scheme cannot afford to ignore every other system.



## ii

In all ages the thinkers who sought to solve the problems of the universe have come to the realization that man is the result, and also the aim of creation. In other words, they have come to the realization that life, the consciousness, which alone is the divine essence, rises upwards from the lowest creation, from the mineral up through the vegetable and animal world, and fulfils its purpose in humanity.

The human creation has therefore been regarded by them as the most sacred creation. The whole tone of Christianity, for example, teaches this. The ideal of the birth of Christ gives an idea of the sacredness of human birth.

The same desire to elevate the ideal of human birth can be seen in every religion; and since religion has at all times held the lives of the people within its grasp, religious customs of various kinds have developed everywhere to surround marriage with sacredness. Because of the idea of the sacredness of human birth, marriage was held sacred. But at the same time polygamy prevailed unrestricted by religion until the coming of Mohammad.

To see life as a whole is beyond the power of the generality of mankind. The outlook of the average man is bounded by the consideration of the welfare of the race or community to which he happens to belong. In the cycles that form the history of civilization man evolves and degenerates, and often his gain in the eyes of succeeding generations has been quite outweighed by a corresponding loss. Man sees no further than he sees; and ever and again the turn of the cycle has brought a period of cruelty, of intolerance, and of degeneration.

Krishna has said, 'Whenever Dharma is threatened, then am I born.' The Sanskrit word Dharma has a wider significance than that usually given to 'religion'; it embraces as well the things of Caesar and the whole of duty and law. The words of all those great teachers who have appeared to guide humanity at various dark moments of history are of supreme value, for the very reason that in their vision and knowledge of life they touched

what is beneath and beyond life, and saw creation as a whole.

It is remarkable that at no time in history was polygamy restricted by religion until the coming of Mohammad. He was the first religious teacher to regulate marriage; until he spoke on the matter, religion, which had always made marriage a sacred union, had nowhere put any limit to the number of a man's wives. Christ, Mohammad's great predecessor, had not pronounced directly or indirectly upon polygamy, the prevalent custom among the Jews of the Old Testament.

Looking at the surface of things many are tempted to wonder, although few will express the thought, whether those great teachers of humanity who themselves led polygamous lives were actuated by sensuality, or by some base conception of life and humanity. Abraham, the father of religion, holy and pure; Moses, the divinely inspired law-giver; Solomon, who represents wisdom and justice, were all these, whose words are read Sunday by Sunday in services dedicated to the worship of Christ, and also Krishna, the Lord of the Hindus, actuated by sensuality or some base conception of woman?

Digging into their histories we find something very different. Take for example the life of Mohammad, who has been so denounced and misunderstood by the ignorant, although he had a larger number of followers than any religious teacher. He, with his broad outlook on life, he, whose actions were prompted by the highest ideals, had the greatest respect for women as for all humanity. Even in the short oath of allegiance that he exacted from his followers he found a place to show his ideal of woman; for his adherents swore 'to speak no evil of women'. As a young man full of strength and vigour he was the faithful husband of Khatidja; and the proof of his sincerity and faithfulness to her is seen in her unswerving devotion to him. She was the first to believe in his inspired message and to sustain him in it. For the eighteen years of their married life they were everything to each other; she shared with him the dangers and insults of those rigorous years, when to all except herself and two or three close friends there seemed no possibility that he should ever succeed in his mission.

How then does this picture of the first part of his life compare



with the latter part, after the death of the beloved Khatidja? A great virtue indeed dictated that later conduct of his, which has been so distorted by those who know but little of his teaching. The few who followed Mohammad believed in him to the extent that they lived for him alone; he was to them the representative of God. They sacrificed all, even their lives for him; and he in his turn gave them all the protection that he could during their lifetime and supported their widows and children when they died. These women could hardly have returned to their own people, for they were outcasts. Widows of men rejected by their families for giving allegiance to Mohammad, with pride they became members of the household of their Prophet.

Not even the most slanderous of the Prophet's detractors has been able to deny that they lived in happiness and harmony; nor able to prove that he ever dealt otherwise than kindly with the women whom he thus took under his care, many of whom were his wives only in name.

Each nation exaggerates the outstanding qualities of the hero it glorifies, and to each the history of the lord and hero of an alien faith, as it is told by its devotees, appears not only incredible, but also repellent. The followers of Mohammad proudly trace relationship with their honoured teacher; thus no doubt this part of his life has been given an unreal prominence, and stories have arisen which have been maliciously perverted by other nations and creeds, unable to appreciate their origin. At the same time it is certain that Mohammad in this way brought about reconciliations between enemy tribes, to the great benefit of his people; a fact that his followers have always gratefully recognized. For the orphans and dependents of families that had been divided by ancient jealousies and blood feuds met together on an equal footing, as honoured members of one family, under his protection.

In this way he gave to his countrymen a new ideal of patriotism. Hali, the poet of modern Hindustan, the beauty of whose verses and whose ideas of religious and social reform have evoked the admiration not only of his own countrymen, but also of the Western world, has expressed this fact in a beautiful lyric, which may be thus roughly translated into prose:

He who was truly a merciful teacher,  
 Who helped the feeble to fulfil their lives,  
 Who was an ever-present help in sorrow,  
 Who grieved with his own people and in  
 the trouble of others,  
 He was my beloved Mohammad.

He who forgave the faults of the wrong-doers,  
 Who cleansed the hearts of the timorous and  
 despairing from their fear,  
 Who vanquished evil with power and with might,  
 Who reconciled families long at war and embittered  
 against each other,  
 He was my beloved Mohammad.

Akbar, the memory of whose reign is engraved upon the hearts of Hindu and Muslim alike for his wisdom in reconciling these two faiths, followed in this the example of the Prophet. For besides the freedom that he gave to his subjects to worship in their own way, whether Christian or Jew, Hindu or Muslim, treating the religion of each community not only with sympathy but also with respect, he also chose princesses from different provinces for his wives, and so promoted understanding between followers of different religions, different standards of morals, and different customs; and his reign is honoured by all Indians as the most peaceful in the whole history of the Moghul Empire.

It was by quality of mind, that the great teachers impressed their messages upon such vast sections of humanity. One mind may be equal to a hundred minds; another to a thousand minds; such is the difference in the quality of men's minds. And it is the quality of a great mind that finds truth, not a quantity of lesser minds. The teaching of any of the great leaders of humanity is of greater value than the opinion that filters through any section of average humanity at any time in history. For the great thinker who contemplates the flow of that divine consciousness which is life, rises in his contemplation above the boundaries which must limit the view of average men at any and every stage of civilization.



## CHAPTER XVII

### PERVERSION

#### i

THE faculties of intelligence express themselves through physical channels, which they have created for the purpose of their expression. The faculty of sight has created the eyes; that of smell has created the nose; each organ in fact has been developed by a certain faculty, in order to express its particular purpose.

Whichever channel activity works through, it effects some purpose. If rightly directed it achieves the intended purpose; if wrongly directed that intended purpose is not accomplished, but some other result is brought about. The ingenuity of science enables the nose to be used as a passage to convey food to the stomach; but science cannot do this without risk of dangerous consequences; and it is a thing quite beyond the unskilled to effect without inflicting injury. To take a railway ticket to Southampton, wishing to go there, and then to get into a train for Brighton, is called a mistake or going astray; but those who are in the train for Brighton, wishing to go to Brighton, cannot be said to be going astray. The tracks of the railway line are made for the smooth running of the train; if the train slips off the track, it not only has difficulty in proceeding but it also causes damage, ploughing up the land and creating destruction in its path.

The generative organs have been developed by the generative faculty, and when used for any other purpose they are misused; and other use directs energy to a wrong channel and creates disorder.

Under a mantle of beauty there may be hidden something desperately evil, while a revolting mask sometimes covers a gem of pure loveliness. The difficulty of touching upon the hideous aspects of life lies in the fact that different social classes are so cut off from one another as to be quite ignorant of each other. Each has its virtues, covering the vices due to its own conventions of

life; and to each the vice it does not know appears more intolerable and more unnatural than the vice it is acquainted with.

There is perversion that follows over-indulgence in the beauty that life offers; and equally perversion follows the too rigid observance of hard and fast moral, social, or religious ideas of order. However beneficial any method of life may appear, it inevitably leads, if carried to excess, to something disastrous or unwholesome which may be called perversion. And so it is that these unwholesome results are usually logical developments of causes of which the individual is the hapless victim; it is not always possible to blame him with justice for his condition.

A vast section of civilized society almost ignores the inborn impulses towards beauty and interest; and its unimaginative conception of life weighs not only upon its younger, but grinds also upon its older members. Wherever the natural channels of life are choked and stopped up, other outlets are forced; some of these may seem to be productive of beauty, but most are proved to be eventually productive of innumerable forms of ugliness or cruelty.

Thus the restrictions which some classes place, by their social and religious conventions, upon the liberty of the individual, with the laudable motive of preserving standards of order, bring about pitiable situations of life; pitiable as the ruin caused by the lawlessness of those other classes which are too powerful, or too obscure, to submit to restraint.

## ii

Music is behind life and rules life; from music springs all life. The whole of creation exists in rhythm. And in a general phrase it may be said that there is one common source of human disease, and that is disorder in rhythm. Rhythm is broken by congestion; and again rhythm is broken when activity goes beyond the boundaries of normality. For it is a phenomenon of activity that it produces energy of itself. In any activity, in walking, in speaking, in thoughts and imaginations, activity increases with its own energy; so that the speed at the end is greater than the speed at the beginning, until the climax when it burns itself out. Also activity gains energy when caught into the speed of a greater



activity. Riding quietly along a road one finds that one's horse will break into a canter if other horses go cantering past.

Perverted desire originates in the debauched, in whom normal desire lives on after physical energy has been spent; and in the physically abnormal and incapable. It originates also in the normal person who is deprived of natural expression. When it arises, the effect is that the normal rhythm of health is broken.

Amongst the former are usually those whose mission in life it is to corrupt others; for just as the spiritually-minded wish to lead others to a spiritual view of life, and the materially-minded enjoy life more when they draw others into their circle of gaiety, so also the pervert desires to spread his influence. The perverted have their own groups and recognize each other.

Amongst the latter, that is those in whom natural expression is denied an outlet, are found some who have ideals of life, and who are above all reproach; their hidden practice may seem quite powerless to break down or injure character, and therefore it may appear quite harmless. But it seems impossible to find any case where health and mind are not affected; for mental despair arises, or confusion or indecision; or else a physical ailment of a nervous kind; or else a state of mind develops which in its turn produces physical disorder. And here we must reflect that modern science has perhaps still to study the effect of emotion on the blood; this seems to be still a somewhat unexplored field in modern medicine.

The artist stands in opposition to nature. It is true that art is nature in miniature; but there is always a tendency in the artist, as he observes nature, to run counter to nature. He observes and moulds and creates and improves and originates; and that is why there is always a tendency in him that leads him away from the natural course of things; that is why perversion is often found among artists.

But playing with passions and the unnatural expression of passion seems to exist in all countries and at all times; it is never quite uprooted, although it always creates a strong feeling of revulsion.

Creator and creation, thus goes the natural rhythm of things; nowhere in nature is there room for an intermediary between these two.

## iii

It is said that ignorance is bliss, but ignorance may well prove to be a curse. There is a tendency in every child that needs guidance, the neglect of which is a most fertile soil for perversion.

This whole subject of perversion is in itself cold and dead; there is no beauty in it; the contemplation of it is deadening and freezes one. A mother or father turns naturally away to other, creative displays of life and spirit, which have some light and warmth in them, giving an insight into character. For instance, if a child tells a lie, there is as a rule some interest in noticing the type of story that he tells; or perhaps he tells a tale that is in itself thoroughly imaginative and amusing.

Also the innocence of a child is so disarming; and innocence is the surest protective armour against all hurt, a truth every parent knows at heart. But what every parent should recognize is that the intelligence of the child is all the time pushing it to make investigations and experiments that are interesting and new. And it is for the guardian to see that this interest receives no unwholesome stimulus. Wherever interest seems strong, it should certainly be disentangled and made straight and clear of mystery in the little mind.

A feeling may be fully awakened in a child before the unperceptive guardian will even think there could be any possibility of the child's having any idea of sex; and a child in its ignorance will deal in its own way with a thing which it finds enjoyable or interesting, and will discover some means or other of self-enjoyment. The parents have not spoken to it of such things; and having found some new sensation in life, it gladly seeks a comrade to share in the new interest. In this way one child learns from another, hiding the fact from its parents; and so a habit may grow and become quite natural without having any special significance to the child at all.

The impression produced by a habit of this kind has results that are almost incalculable. The abnormal child will no doubt be given a direction that will develop into a definite taste for abnormalities in later years. But the average child will suffer in



other ways; for instance it may with the years develop a distaste for marriage, or a coldness that affects relationship in marriage. Undeniably the impression received by its mind will colour its attitude towards life for many years to come, arousing perhaps a feeling of contempt or of shame for sex; but whatever unhealthy attitude towards nature is thus evoked will affect its whole existence. If parents could realize that every child has an inclination towards perversion which starts as play, and that it needs teaching and guidance in its inclinations, some to a greater and some to a lesser extent, many disasters might be prevented.

A child is intelligent and can easily be brought to notice the difference between people, and to admire the noble and beautiful. It can easily be trained to a healthy discrimination, with an inclination towards all that is sane, wholesome, and vigorous, as being productive of the greatest happiness and pleasure, with a contempt of all uncleanness, and with a fear of the consequences of all unlawfulness. There is no need to punish or to frighten a child, any more than there is any need to feel disgust or fear for a child when it shows an inclination that needs correction; words usually produce the best remembered impressions.

Children have many influences to deal with that come from without. Not only through other children come unpleasant and perverting suggestions in playtime, as an English saying goes, 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do'; but also through older people. Old age often blunts the fineness of feeling; and even among the aged and trusted may be found monstrous tendencies which enjoy watching the spring of interest in the child; ignorant nurses, perhaps without thought of harm, will play with that interest, and there are monster souls who enjoy above all the thought of being the first to enjoy the passion of youth; and others, who have perhaps the greatest refinement and delicacy of thought and life and sentiment, but who find such an overwhelming attraction in the vigour, in the springlike beauty of youth, as not to be able to refrain from tampering with it, to get enjoyment and interest out of it in some way or other. Also there are many older people who have a hatred for the opposite sex which they impart to children. This is especially true of women; and it is not uncommon for women to make a mission

of prejudicing young girls against a normal and healthy attitude towards men.

Perhaps there is no grown person who has not a recollection of some occurrence of the sort in his or her own life; but with a dim memory of the strangeness and horror of it, the grown person remembers too his own extraordinary youthful innocence that came to his rescue; and so he feels inclined to trust to the strength of that same innocence in his own child, not considering in what unknown and difficult situation a child may be entangled.

Or else a parent may be anxious to protect his girl, and less inclined to protect his boy; never having perhaps traced very carefully what depth of influence that early experience of his, even if of short duration, had on his own life; and therefore never having realized what lack of vigour in body, what amount of indecision in mind, of obscurity of purpose, of loss of the total sum of his individual happiness or success might be traced to it. Before the mind of a parent these human tendencies should ever be present; and it is his obligation to awaken in good time the youth under his care.

#### iv

The knowledge of these things awakens. Not that we are forced thereby to become virtuous; but that we see what power virtue and vice have, looking upon vice as any activity which eventually brings unhappiness to humanity. It is the emotional nature which is susceptible to the desire to experience new sensations; and it is the emotional nature that is the great nature. The great character is on the one side more daring than the average; and on the other more loving, more responsive, more alive, and therefore more likely to fall into the ditch. But the one who falls, and yet comes out again uninjured, and with wings free and pure, is a rare bird.

There is a temperament that finds it impossible to speak of such subjects, a temperament that would eagerly desire to warn youth, and to awaken the one who is blindly following a wrong path, but who finds it impossible to speak the necessary words. This reserve springs from a delicate and sensitive respect for human



nature; it has been described by Mohammad as *Hayya*,<sup>1</sup> 'the quality of the truly religious'; and it prefers to place the greatest trust and confidence in youth, and in friends. It is one that draws out and fosters virtue in others. How many young people owe their unstained records to the trust and confidence placed in them by the mother! At the same time education requires something more than a silent condemnation; it requires the clarification and understanding of that law of reciprocity which is the basic law of nature.

An artist relates how his father, whom he greatly respected, gave him no rules of conduct, but treated him always with trust and confidence; and how it was from his brother-in-law, the husband of his much older sister, that he received as a child a much needed warning. The brother-in-law, seeing the ardour, the generosity, the sociability, the enthusiasm for life of the youth, took him to various parts of the town, pointing out the different types of humanity; reminding him at the same time of the great traditions of his race and of his family, of the ideals of his fathers, of the beauty and pride of nobility. What he pointed out and what the youth saw with his own eyes left an undying impression on his mind of the effects of perverted life, influencing the whole trend of his life. Youth is generous, youth is ardent, and rarely fails to respond.

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 138.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# PROSTITUTION

### i

THE world looks with contempt on the woman of the street, as a web of evil that drags men's lives to ruin; as a being whose conduct cannot be honourable; as one scarcely worthy of being spoken of. But she gives a welcome to many a one who is quite destitute, or so low or so disagreeable that he could find no other refuge if refused one by her. The drunken and dissipated men, blind with animal passion; men travelling; strangers in a town who are lonely; most strange of all, men who are advised by a physician to have intercourse with a woman, all these find a welcome at her door. She is the victim of so much of the evil of the world; she is a martyr crushed by the refuse of the world. She is as it were a human cesspool of the dirt and degradation of society.

Things appear good or bad to the individual according to his own standard, formed usually on his own good or bad experiences of life. But it is possible to leave aside one's own standard, except as a means by which to judge oneself, and to search for the hidden cause of results. If a man does this he will find innumerable customs existing for material profit which are not called prostitution although there is really no other name for them.

From the earliest times man has bought and sold all things that he needed, and he seldom considers the real value of what he buys, but he fixes a price by the degree of his need and by his difficulty in satisfying it. For instance, in wealthy European cities one has seen the working day of workmen, and even of children, sold for next to nothing, so that the misery of their conditions cried aloud; and again at another time they have received a wage for the same work, that enabled them to lift their heads with some of the dignity that human kind should show; or again, at the other extreme, children have been paid a wage that could have



supported a whole family. And these differences in money paid for the same working lives depended on no other fact than the supply of hands in the world of industry. Thus most unnatural customs appear natural to man, who still prides himself on the thought that mankind is always evolving, and that the latest phase of civilization is the best from all points of view.

And however unnatural it may seem to a man, it should be a natural law to him that the least price he can give to a woman in exchange for herself is his heart, even when he offers to contract marriage with her. If a woman through poverty, willingly sells him her body for money, it is shame to him if he does not meet her needs and help her from principle, and not only from lust.

## ii

East and West, women show the same unrelenting attitude of sternness towards the prostitute; and one reason is that in all countries women are the main upholders of religion, and no great religion has ever permitted prostitution. But the chief reason for this sternness is undoubtedly the truth, unconsciously known to everyone, that although the human being who has never had an ideal is to be pitied, the woman who has had an ideal and has allowed the circumstances of life to break it, has herself thrown away her soul. And it is hard for any woman to tolerate the thought that another woman should be born without an ideal of womanhood.

'The prostitute, grown old, makes a business of her calling, and the girls she has are her slaves', says Sa'di. Where slavery was banished in its outward appearance in society, prostitution, which is really a slave business, simply changed hands. The expert prostitute is the centre of this traffic; she not only brings up young girls to it, taking her share of the profits, but to her gravitate the ruined or deserted women, who are too ashamed to go home or who perhaps have none to go to. Before her they feel no shame; and with her welcome, unspoiled by the cold reproaches of hard speech that the virtuous too often proffer with their assistance, she gives kindness and sympathy and also practical help and a means of subsistence.

Only in her springlike youth does the prostitute find anyone to care for her; after that time is passed she often begins to live on the earnings of other women. Sometimes she herself is in the hands of a man who is the real slave-owner of the business; and at other times she has her men agents who help her to spread her trade for their own profit.

The customs of this trade, which is learned and taught like any other, seem to vary little from country to country; although here and there one finds definite reasons why it should flourish a little more or a little less. When one part of a community is considered entirely subject to another part, or where one race is subject to another in the same country, this business seems to increase. Also military camps have always promoted it; the very conditions of camp life must give scope to it.

Sometimes the human being finds himself in an occupation which works against his conscience; he follows it for the sake of his livelihood only. It satisfies him for a time because it satisfies his material needs, but there comes a moment in his development when he can bear his yoke no longer. And many times, even in the lives of the most degraded, comes this moment when they feel that they must grow out of their surroundings, or break away at all costs.

There was once an Indian woman, a singer, who led this degraded life of the prostitute, but she had one quality: when others sang only to please the rich, she would also sing to those who could not pay her. And this generosity in her was the means of leading her to meet and see such souls as she would hardly otherwise have seen in that profession. At last the qualities of kindness and charity of heart so developed in her that her voice became an inspiration and a source of uplift to many devotional souls. And thus she grew away from her profession and in the end became renowned for her piety throughout India.

### iii

The outlook of the great teachers whose teachings have changed the outlook upon life of millions and millions in the world, has always been alike in this: they have never been willing to point



out the fault in another, and to hurt the faulty one. It was in their regard for the dignity of humanity, in their modesty and service, that lay the beauty and greatness of their great lives.

The mystic voice of Amir has said, 'Such beauty lies in Thy forgiveness, that it seems to me that it would have been a sin in me if I had not sinned; for then I should not have known Thy loving-kindness and the wonder and beauty of Thy true nature and being.'

Crime is natural. If crime were not natural, from where would it come? All men are subject to fault; their very virtues develop into faults. The great teacher has therefore taught patience, which means to be patient, and not to expect patience. He has taught respect, which means to show respect, not to demand it. He has taught unselfishness, which means to be unselfish without expecting a reward. The great teacher has found his religion in his study of life, and has shown the interdependence of human lives; and that what a man gives, that he receives. He has taught man to lift his light upon high, so that he may live in light; in that light which is never extinguished in man although usually kept under a covering cloud or a bushel of selfishness and greed, so that its owner lives in a darkened room.

There comes a stage in the moral evolution of man when he perceives and understands the moral of beneficence, and he learns to return good for evil. At this stage in his progress he hears a chord that connects and runs through him and through all. He finds himself as it were a dome, in which good and evil find re-echoing tones. Evil done to him echoes within him in a desire to do evil in return; and good done to him echoes within him in a desire to return good. Therefore, in order that his own actions may in their turn call out nothing but good, he desires always to do good, and to return both good for good, and good for evil.

But there is a higher stage to which he may progress. And then it seems to him that this connecting chord swells into a great sea, and he realizes that the interdependence of lives is such, because the spirit is one, and because it is the spirit that unites and the spirit that gives life.





CHARACTER-BUILDING  
AND  
THE ART OF PERSONALITY





## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. Character-building	197
II. The Art of Personality	214



## CHAPTER I

### CHARACTER-BUILDING

#### i

THE will-power plays a great part in character-building. And the will-power becomes feeble when a person yields to every little tendency, inclination, and fancy he has; but when a person fights against every little fancy and tendency and inclination he learns to fight with himself, and in this way he develops will-power. When once a person's inclinations, fancies, and tendencies have grown stronger than his will-power, he experiences in his life several enemies existing in his own self, and he finds it difficult to combat them. For inclinations, fancies, and tendencies, when powerful, do not let will-power work against them. If there is any such thing as self-denial, it is this practice; and by this practice in time one attains to a power which may be called mastery over oneself.

In small things of everyday life one neglects this consideration because one thinks, 'These are *my* tendencies, *my* fancies, *my* inclinations, and by respecting them I respect myself, by considering them I consider myself.' But one forgets that what one calls *my* is not oneself, it is what wills that is oneself. Therefore in the Christian prayer it is said, Thy Will be done, which means, Thy Will when it works through me; in other words, my will which is Thy Will, be done. It is this illusion of confusing one's possession with oneself that creates all illusion and keeps man from self-realization.

Life is a continual battle. Man struggles with things that are outside him, and so he gives a chance to the foes who exist in his own being. Therefore the first thing necessary in life is to make peace for the time being with the outside world, in order to prepare for the war which is to be fought within oneself. Once peace is made within, one will gain by that sufficient strength and power to be used through the struggle of life within and without.



Self-pity is the worst poverty. When a person says, 'I am . . .' with pity, before he has said anything more he has diminished himself to half of what he is; and what is said further, diminishes him totally; nothing more of him is left afterwards. There is so much in the world that we can pity and which it would be right for us to take pity upon, but if we have no time free from our own self we cannot give our mind to others in the world. Life is one long journey, and the further behind we have left our self, the further we have progressed towards the goal. Verily when the false self is lost the true self is discovered.

## ii

In character-building it is most necessary that one should learn how to face the world, the world where one meets with sorrows and troubles and pleasures and pains. It is very difficult for one to hide them from the world, and at the same time a wise person is not meant to show all he feels nor to show at every moment what he feels. The ordinary person, like a machine, reacts in answer to every outer influence and inner impulse; and in this way he very often cannot keep to the law of the music of life.

Life to a wise person is music; and in that symphony he has to play a certain part. If one were feeling so low that one's heart was sounding a lower pitch, and the demand of life at that moment was that one should voice a higher pitch, then one would feel that one had failed in that music in which one was meant to play one's part fittingly. This is the test by which you can distinguish the old soul and the child soul. The child soul will give way to every feeling; the old soul will strike the higher note in spite of every difficulty.

There are moments when laughter must be kept back, and there are times when tears must be withheld. And those who have arrived at the stage where they can act efficiently the part that they are meant to act in this life's drama, have even power over the expression of their face; they can even turn their tears into smiles, or their smiles into tears. One may ask, is it not hypocrisy not to be natural? But he who has control over his nature is more natural; he is not only natural, he is the master of nature, while the

one who lacks power over nature, in spite of his naturalness, is weak.

Also, it must be understood that real civilization means the art of life. What is that art? It is knowing the music of life. Once a soul has awakened to the continual music of life, that soul will consider it as his responsibility, as his duty, to play his part in outer life, even if it be contrary to his inner condition for the moment. One must know at every moment in one's daily life: what does life demand of me, what does it ask of me, and how shall I answer the demand of my life? This requires one to be awakened fully to life's conditions. One must have insight into human nature, and one must be able to know one's own condition fully. If one says, 'I am as I am; if I am sad, I am sad; if I am glad, I am glad,' that will not do. Even the earth will not bear the person who will not answer life's demands. The sky will not tolerate that person, and the sphere will not accommodate him who is not ready to give what life demands of him. If this is true, then it is best when it is easily done and willingly done.

In the orchestra there is a conductor and there are many who play the music; and every player of an instrument has to fulfil his part in the performance. If he does not do it rightly, it is his fault. The conductor will not listen if he says he did not do it properly because he was sad or because he was too glad. The conductor of the orchestra is not concerned with his sadness or his gladness. He is concerned with the part that the particular musician must play in the whole symphony. This is the nature of our lives. The further we advance in our part in this orchestra, the more efficiently we perform our part in life's symphony. In order to be able to have this control over oneself, what is necessary? We must have control over our inner self, because every outward manifestation is nothing but a reaction of the inner condition. Therefore the first control that one has to gain is over one's own self, one's inner self, which is done by strengthening the will, and also by understanding life better.

### iii

In everyday life it is most necessary to have control over speech and action, for one may automatically give way to a word,



prompted by an inner impulse; afterwards one finds that one should not have said it, or perhaps one should have said it differently. It is the same with action. One feels, 'I should not have done so', after having done something; or one thinks, 'I should have done differently'; but once it is done it is too late to do it otherwise. In human nature there is an inner urge to express oneself; and that urge pushes a word out of one, so to speak, before one has really thought of it; and all this shows lack of control over oneself.

It is also a sign of nervousness. Very often a person tries to answer somebody who has not yet finished speaking; before a sentence is completed the answer is given. Such an answer given to an incomplete idea is often wrong. What generally happens in such cases is that one takes all that comes from outside in life too much to heart, and allows these outer things and influences to penetrate one more deeply than they should. In this way one becomes sensitive, and out of this arises nervousness.

In order to practise self-control in all one does in everyday life, the best thing is to develop in one's nature a certain amount of indifference. Every word that is said to one need not be taken to be so important that it upsets one's whole being, disturbs one's balance, and robs one of one's will-power. There are things that matter; but there are many things in one's everyday life which do not matter much, and one is often apt to put undue stress upon them.

Independence is achieved by indifference. It does not mean that one should take no heed of what anyone does or says; it only means one should discriminate between important and unimportant things of everyday life; that every necessary and unnecessary thing should not demand so much of one's attention, thought, and feeling. Political economy has become a subject of education, but spiritual economy is the main thing in religion. All one says and does and all that one thinks and feels puts a certain strain upon one's spirit. It is wise to avoid every risk of losing one's equilibrium. One must stand peacefully but firmly before all influences that disturb one's life. The natural inclination is to answer in defence to every offence that comes from outside,



but in that way one loses one's equilibrium. Self-control, therefore, is the key to all success and happiness.

Besides, there are many who feel urged and obliged to say or do something because it is asked of them, and in this way they get weaker and weaker. There are others who roughly fight against it; and in this way both are in error. He who is able to keep his equilibrium without being annoyed, without being troubled about it, gains that mastery which is needed in the evolution of life. No principle must be blindly followed. Spiritual economy is not always a virtue, if it disturbs harmony, if it in any way keeps one from progress, or if it places one in a worse condition. However, it is most necessary to know the science of spiritual economy; how to guard against all influences in our everyday life which come to disturb our tranquillity and the peace of our soul.

## iv

A very important thing in character-building is to become conscious of one's relationship, obligation, and duty to each person in the world, and not to mix that link and connection which is established between oneself and another with a third person. One must consider that everything that is entrusted to one by any person in life is one's trust, and one must know that to prove true to the confidence of any person in the world is one's sacred obligation. In this manner a harmonious connection is established with everyone; and it is this harmony which attunes the soul to the infinite.

It requires a great study of human nature, together with tact, to keep on harmonious terms with everyone in life. If one has an admiration for someone, or a grudge against someone, it is better to express it directly instead of mixing it up with many connections and relationships in the world. Friends apart, even in an acquaintanceship such consideration is necessary, to guard carefully that thin thread that connects two souls in whatever relation or capacity.

*Dharma* in the language of the Hindus means religion, but the literal meaning of this word is duty. It suggests that one's

relation to every person in the world is one's religion; and the more conscientiously one follows it, the more keen one proves in following one's religion. To keep the secret of our friend, our acquaintance, even of someone with whom for a time one has been vexed, is the most sacred obligation. The one who thus realizes his religion would never consider it right to tell another of any harm or hurt he has received from his friend.

It is in this way that self-denial is learned; not always by fasting and retiring into the wilderness. A man conscientious in his duty and in his obligations to his friends is more pious than someone sitting in solitude. The one in solitude does not serve God, he only helps himself by enjoying the pleasure of solitude; but the one who proves trustworthy to every soul he meets, and considers his relationships and connections, small or great, as something sacred, certainly observes the spiritual law of that religion which is the religion of all religions.

Faults? Everyone has faults. Oneself, one's friend, and one's enemy are all subject to faults. The one who wishes that his own faults should not be disclosed must necessarily consider the same for the others he meets. The one who knows what the relation of friendship is between one soul and another, the tenderness of that connection, its delicacy, its beauty, and its sacredness, that one can enjoy life in its fullness, for he is living; and in this manner he must some day communicate with God. For it is the same bridge that connects two souls in the world which, once built, becomes the path to God. There is no greater virtue in this world than proving kind and trustworthy to one's friend, worthy of his confidence. The difference between the old soul and the young soul is to be found in this particular principle. The young soul only knows himself and what he wants, absorbed in his own pleasures and displeasures and obsessed by his ever-changing moods. The old soul regards his relation to every soul, he keenly observes his obligations towards everyone he knows in the world. He covers his wounds, if he happens to have any, from the sight of others, and endures all things in order to fulfil his duty to the best of his ability towards everyone in the world.



## v

Subtlety of nature is the sign of the intelligent. If a person takes the right direction he does good with this wealth of intelligence, but a person who is going in a wrong direction may abuse this great faculty. When someone who is subtle by nature is compared with the personality which is devoid of it, it is like the river and the mountain. The subtle personality is as pliable as running water, everything that comes before that personality is reflected in it as clearly as the image in the pure water. The rock-like personality, without subtlety, is like a mountain, it reflects nothing. Many admire plain speaking, but the reason is they lack understanding of fine subtlety. Can all things be put into words? Is there not anything more fine, more subtle than spoken words? The person who can read between the lines makes a book out of one letter. Subtlety of perception and subtlety of expression are the signs of the wise. Wise and foolish are distinguished by fineness on the part of the one and rigidness on the part of the other. A person devoid of subtlety wants truth to be turned into a stone; but the subtle one will turn even a stone into truth.

In order to acquire spiritual knowledge, receive inspiration, prepare one's heart for inner revelation, one must try to make one's mentality pliable like water rather than like a rock; for the further along the path of life's mystery a person will journey, the more subtle he will have to become in order to perceive and to express the mystery of life. God is a mystery, His knowledge is a mystery, life is a mystery, human nature is a mystery; in short, the depth of all knowledge is a mystery, even science or art.

All that is more mysterious is more deep. What all the prophets and masters have done in all ages is to express that mystery in words, in deeds, in thoughts, in feelings; but most of the mystery is expressed by them in silence. For then the mystery is in its place. To bring the mystery down to earth is like pulling down a king on to the ground from his throne; but allowing the mystery to remain in its own place, in the silent spheres, is like giving homage to the King to whom all homage is due.

Life's mysteries apart, in little things of everyday life the fewer



words used, the more profitable it is. Do you think more words explain more? No, not at all. It is only nervousness on the part of those who wish to say a hundred words to explain a thing which can quite well be explained in two words; and on the part of the listener it is lack of intelligence when he wants a hundred words in order to understand something which can just as well be explained in one word. Many think that more words explain things better; but they do not know that mostly as many words as are spoken, so many veils are wrapped around the idea. In the end you go out by the same door through which you entered.

Respect, consideration, reverence, kindness, compassion and sympathy, forgiveness and gratefulness, all these virtues can be best adorned by subtlety of expression. One need not dance in thanksgiving; one word of thanks is quite sufficient. One need not cry out loudly, 'I sympathize with you, my dear friend!' One need not play drums and say, 'I have forgiven somebody!' Such things are fine, subtle; they are to be felt; no noise can express them. Noise only spoils their beauty and takes from their value. In spiritual ideas and thoughts subtlety is more needed than in anything else. If a spiritual person were to bring his realizations into the market-place, and dispute with everyone that came along about his beliefs and disbeliefs, where would he end?

What makes a spiritual person harmonize with all people in the world? The key to the art of conciliation which a spiritual person possesses is subtlety both in perception and expression. Is it lack of frankness, is it hypocrisy to be subtle? Not in the least. There are many people who are outspoken, always ready to tell the truth in a way which is like hitting another person on the head, and who proudly support their frankness by saying, 'I do not mind if it makes anybody sorry or angry, I only tell the truth.' If the truth is as hard as a hammer may truth never be spoken, may no one in the world follow such a truth!

Then where is that truth which is peace-giving, which is healing, which is comforting to every heart and soul, that truth which uplifts the soul, which is creative of harmony and beauty, where is that truth born? That truth is born in subtlety of intelligence in thought, speech, and action, of fineness which brings pleasure, comfort, beauty, harmony, and peace.

## vi

There are two attitudes which divide people into two sections. The one is an ever-complaining attitude, and the other is an ever-smiling attitude. Life is the same; call it good, call it bad, call it right, call it wrong; it is what it is, it cannot be otherwise. A person complains in order to get the sympathy of others and to show them his good points, sometimes in order to show himself as more just, more intelligent, and also in the right. He complains about everything, about friends and about foes, about those he loves, and much more about those he hates. He complains from morning till evening, and there is never an end to his complaint. It can increase to such an extent that the weather is not good and the air is not good and the atmosphere is not good; he is against both earth and sky, and everything everybody does is wrong; until it reaches the stage where that man begins to dislike his own works; and it culminates when he dislikes himself. In this way he grows to be against others, against conditions, and in the end against himself.

Do not imagine that this is a character rarely to be found in the world. It is a character you frequently meet with, and certainly the one who has this attitude is his own worst enemy. The person with a right attitude of mind tries to make even wrong right, but the one with a wrong attitude of mind will turn even right into wrong. Besides, magnetism is the need of every soul; the lack of it makes life burdensome. The tendency of seeing wrong in everything robs one to a great extent of that magnetism which is needed very much in life. For the nature of life is such that naturally the multitude only accepts those who come to it with the power of magnetism, and casts out everyone else. In other words, the world is a place where you cannot enter without a pass of admission, and that pass of admission is magnetism; the one who does not possess it will be refused everywhere.

Besides, you will find many who are always complaining about their health. There may be good reason, but sometimes there may be very little reason, too little indeed to speak of. And when once a person has become accustomed to answer despondently when



sympathetically asked, 'How are you?' he certainly waters the plant of illness in himself by this complaining tendency.

Our life of limitation in the world, and the nature of this world's comforts and pleasures which are so changeable and unreliable, and the falseness that one finds in everything everywhere, if one complained about it, a whole lifetime would be too short to complain about it fully; every moment of our life would become filled with complaints. But the way out is to look at the cheerful side of it, the bright side. Especially those who seek God and truth, for them there is something else to think about; they need not think how bad a person is. When they think who is behind this person, who is in his heart, then they will look at life with hope. When we see things which are wrong, if we only give thought to this: that behind all workings there is God, who is just and perfect, then we will certainly become hopeful.

The attitude of looking at everything with a smile is the sign of the saintly soul. A smile given to a friend, a smile given even to an enemy will win him over in the end; for this is the key to the heart of man. As the sunshine from without lights the whole world, so the sunshine from within, if it were raised up, would illuminate the whole life, in spite of all the seeming wrongs and in spite of all limitations. God is happiness, the soul is happiness, the spirit is happiness. There is no place for sadness in the kingdom of God. That which deprives man of happiness deprives him of God and of truth.

One can begin to learn to smile by appreciating every little good thing that comes in one's way through life, and by overlooking every bad thing that one does not like to see. Be not troubled too much about unnecessary things in life which give nothing but displeasure. But looking at life with a hopeful attitude of mind, with an optimistic view, it is this which will give one the power of turning wrong into right, and bringing light into the place where all is darkness. Cheerfulness is life, sulkiness is death. Life attracts, death repulses. The sunshine which comes from the soul, rises through the heart, and manifests itself in man's smile is indeed the light from the heavens. In that light many flowers grow and many fruits become ripe.



## vii

The best way of working in all ways of life, at home or outside, is noiseless working, a thing which is so little thought of by many and which is so necessary in creating order, harmony, and peace in life. Very often a person does little and speaks much about it. In doing every little thing he makes a noise, and thereby very often, instead of finishing something successfully, he attracts difficulties.

The first thing to be remembered in character-building is to understand the secret and character of human nature. We must know that every person in the world has his own object in life, his own interest and his point of view, and that he is concerned with himself. His peace is disturbed when you wish to interest him in your object of interest. If you wish to force upon him your point of view, however near and dear he may be to you, he is not pleased with it. Very few consider this; and they wish to pour out their own troubles and difficulties upon someone near to them, thinking, 'Everyone has the same interest in my subject as I myself and everyone has the same point of view as myself; so everyone will be glad to hear my tale.'

There is a story told that a person began to speak before a new acquaintance about his ancestors. He continued so long that the patience of his hearer was thoroughly exhausted. In the end the acquaintance interrupted the story by asking, 'If I do not care to know about my own ancestors, what do I care to know about yours?' There are many who are very keen to let their neighbours know about every cold and cough they may have; every little gain or loss, however small, they would be glad to announce with drums and bugles. This is a childish quality; this tendency shows a child soul. Sometimes it frightens away friends and helps the foes. People who work noisily accomplish little, for they attract by their noise ten more people who come and interfere and spoil the work which one person could easily have finished.

Noisiness comes from restlessness, and restlessness is the sign of *Tanmas*, the destructive rhythm. Those who have made any success in life, in whatever direction, have done so by their quiet

working. In business, in industry, in art, in science, in education, in politics, in all directions of life, a wise worker is the quiet worker. He tells about things when the time comes, not before. The one who talks about things before he has accomplished them is like a cook who is announcing dishes before they are cooked, to the whole neighbourhood.

There is a story told in the East of an enthusiastic servant. The master had a headache, and he told the servant to go and fetch some medicine from the chemist. The servant thought it would not be sufficient only to fetch medicine from the chemist; so he also made an appointment with the doctor, and on his way home he visited the undertaker. The master asked, 'Why are you so late?' The servant said, 'Sir, I arranged everything.' Enthusiasm is a great thing in life. It is creative and it is a key to success, but too much of it sometimes spoils things. The more wise a person, the more gentle he is in everything he does. A gentleman, in the English language, is the quiet man.

There is a fable that a donkey went to a camel and said, 'Uncle, we shall be friends, we shall go grazing together.' The camel said, 'Child, I enjoy my walks alone.' Said the donkey, 'I am most eager to accompany you, uncle.' The good-natured camel consented to it, and they both went together. Long before the camel finished grazing the donkey had finished and was eager to express himself. He said, 'Uncle, I would like to sing, if you don't mind.' The camel said, 'Do not do such a thing. It will be a terrible thing for both you and me. I have not yet finished my dinner.' The donkey had no patience, he could not control his joy and began to sing. A husbandman, attracted by his singing, came with a long bamboo. The donkey ran away, and all the thrashing fell upon the back of the camel. When next morning the donkey went again to invite Uncle Camel, the camel said, 'I am too ill, and your way is different and my way is different. From today we shall part.'

There is such a great difference between the quiet person and a noisy person. One is like a restless child, the other like a grown-up person. One constructs, the other destroys. A quiet way of working must be practised in everything. By making too much ado about nothing one creates commotion, disturbance in the



atmosphere; useless activity without any result. One also finds noise in the tendency to exaggeration, when someone wants to make a mountain out of a molehill. Modesty, humility, gentleness, meekness, all such virtues are manifest in the person who works quietly through life.

## viii

There is something which belongs to human nature, and its origin is in curiosity; curiosity which gives a desire for knowledge. When the tendency is abused it develops into inquisitiveness. It is wonderful that the root of all defects is a right tendency, and it is the abuse of that right tendency which turns it into a defect. If we considered how little time we have to live on this earth, we would see that every moment of our life is precious, and that it should be given to something which is really worth while. When that time is given to inquisitiveness, wanting to know about the affairs of others, one has wasted that time which could have been used for a much better purpose. Life has so many responsibilities and so many duties, and there is so much that one has to correct in oneself, there is so much that one has to undo in what one has done, and there is so much to attend to in one's affairs to make one's life right, that it seems as if a person were intoxicated who, leaving all his responsibilities and duties, occupies himself, occupies his mind with inquisitiveness and engages his ears in it.

Free will is given to attend to one's own duties, to gain one's own objects, to attend to one's own affairs, and when that free will is used in trying to find out about others, the weaknesses of others, the lacks of others, the faults of others, one certainly abuses free will. Sometimes a person is inquisitive because of his interest in the lives of others, but very often a person is inquisitive because it is his illness. He may have no interest in the matter at all; it is only because he wants to satisfy himself by hearing and knowing about others. Self-knowledge is the ideal of the philosophers, not the knowledge of the lives of others.

There are two phases in the development of a man, one phase when he looks at others, and another phase when he looks at himself. When the first phase has ended and the next phase begun,

o



then one starts one's journey to the desired goal. Rumi says, 'Trouble not about others, for there is much for you to think of in yourself.'

Besides this, it is a sign of great respect to the aged and to those one wishes to respect, to show no tendency of knowing more than one is allowed to know. Even in such a close relationship as parents and children, when they respect the privacy of one another they certainly show therein a great virtue.

To want to know about another is very often a lack of trust. One who trusts does not need to unveil, does not need to discover what is covered. He who wishes to unveil something, wishes to discover it. If there is anything that should be discovered first, it is the self. The time that one spends in discovering others, their lives, their faults, their weaknesses, one could just as well spend in discovering one's soul. The desire to know is born in the soul. But man should discern what must be known, what is worth knowing. There are many things not worth troubling about. When one devotes one's time and thought to trying to know what one need not know, one loses that opportunity which life offers to discover the nature and secret of the soul, in which lies the fulfilment of the purpose of life.

### ix

It must be remembered that one shows lack of nobleness of character by love of gossiping. It is so natural, and yet it is a great fault in the character to cherish the tendency to talk about others. One shows a great weakness when one makes remarks about someone behind his back. In the first place it is against what may be called frankness, and also it is judging another, which is wrong according to the teaching of Christ, who says, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'. When one allows this tendency to remain in one, one develops love of talking about others. It is a defect which commonly exists, and when two people meet who have the same tendency, they gossip together. One helps the other, one encourages the other. And when something is supported by two people of necessity it becomes a virtue, if only for the time being.

How often man forgets that although he is talking about someone in his absence, yet it is spoken in the presence of God. God hears all things and knows all things. The Creator knows about His creatures, about their virtues and faults. God is displeased by hearing about the fault of His creature, as an artist would be displeased on hearing bad remarks made by anyone on his art. Even though he acknowledged the defect of his art, he would still prefer finding it himself, and not anyone else. When a person speaks against someone his words may not reach the other, but his feelings reach him. If he is sensitive he knows of someone having talked against him; and when he sees the person who has been talking against him, he reads all he has said in his face, if he be sensitive and of a keen sight. This world is a house of mirrors, the reflection of one is mirrored upon another. In this world where so many things seem hidden, in reality nothing remains hidden; everything some time or other rises to the surface and manifests itself to view.

How few in this world know what an effect it makes on one's personality, talking ill of another; what influence it has on one's soul! Man's self within is not only like a dome where everything he says has an echo, but that echo is creative and productive of what has been said. Every good and bad thing in one's life one develops by taking interest in it. Every fault one has, as long as it is small, one does not notice it; and so one develops the fault till it results in a disappointment. Life is so precious, and it becomes more and more valuable as one becomes more prudent; and every moment of life can be used for a much greater purpose. Life is an opportunity and the more one realizes this, the more one will make the best of this opportunity which life offers.

## x

The spirit of generosity in nature builds a path to God, for generosity is outgoing, is spontaneity; its nature is to make its way towards a wide horizon. Generosity, therefore, may be called charity of heart. It is not necessary that the spirit of generosity be shown always by the spending of money; in every little thing one can show it. Generosity is an attitude a person shows in every



little action that he does for people that he comes in contact with in his everyday life. One can show generosity by a smile, by a kind glance, by a warm handshake; by patting the younger soul on the shoulder as a mark of encouragement, of showing appreciation, of expressing affection. Generosity one can show in accommodating one's fellow-man, in welcoming him, in bidding farewell to one's friend. In thought, word, and deed, in every manner and form one can show that generous spirit which is the sign of the godly.

The Bible speaks of generosity by the word 'charity', but if I were to give an interpretation of the word 'generosity' I would call it nobility. No rank, position, or power can prove one noble; truly noble is he who is generous of heart. What is generosity? It is nobility, it is expansion of heart. As the heart expands, so the horizon becomes wide, and one finds greater and greater scope in which to build the kingdom of God.

Depression, despair, and all manner of sorrow and sadness come from lack of generosity. Where does jealousy come from? Where does envy, aching of the heart come from? It all comes from lack of generosity. A man may not have one single coin to his name, and yet he can be generous, he can be noble, if only he has a large heart of friendly feeling. Life in the world offers every opportunity to a man, whatever be his position in life, to show if he has any spirit of generosity.

The changeableness and falsehood of human nature, besides lack of consideration and thoughtlessness for those whom he meets through life, and furthermore the selfishness and grabbing and grafting spirit that disturbs and troubles his soul, all these create a situation which is itself a test and trial through which every soul has to pass in the midst of worldly life. And when through this test and trial a man holds fast to his principle of charity, and marches along towards his destination, not allowing the influences that come from the four corners of the world to keep him back from his journey to the goal, in the end he becomes the king of life, even if when he reaches his destination there is not left one single earthly coin to his name.

It is not earthly wealth that makes man rich. Riches come by discovering that gold-mine which is hidden in the human heart,



out of which comes the spirit of generosity. Someone asked the Prophet, whose virtue was the greatest, that of the pious soul who prays continually or that of the traveller who travels to make the holy pilgrimage, or of the one who fasts for nights and days, or of the one who learns the Scripture by heart. 'None of them', said the Prophet, 'is so great as the soul who shows through life charity of heart.'

## CHAPTER II

# THE ART OF PERSONALITY

### i

THERE is one thing: to be man; and there is another thing: to be a person, a man, by completing the individuality in which is hidden the purpose of man's coming on earth. Angels were made to sing the praise of the Lord, jinns to imagine, to dream, to meditate; but man is created to show humanity in character. It is this which makes him a person. There are many difficult things in life, but the most difficult of all is to learn and to know and to practise the art of personality.

Nature, people say, is created by God and art by man; but in reality in the making of personality it is God who completes His divine art. It is not what Christ has taught that makes his devotees love him; they dispute over those things in vain; it is what he himself was. It is that which is loved and admired by his devotees. When Jesus Christ said to the fishermen, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men', what did it mean? It meant, 'I will teach you the art of personality, which will become as a net in this life's sea.' For every heart, whatever be its grade of evolution, will be attracted by the beauty of the art of personality.

What does mankind seek in another person, what does man expect in his friend? He wants him rich, of a high position, of a great power, of wonderful qualifications, of wide influence; but beyond and above all he expects from his friend the humane qualities which are the art of personality. If one's friend lacks the art of personality, all the above things are of but little use and value to him.

There is a question: how are we to learn it? We learn it by our love of art, by our love of beauty in all its less various aspects. The artist learns his art by his admiration of beauty. When a person gets an insight into beauty, then he learns the art of arts, which is the art of personality. A man may have a thousand qualifications,



or rank, or position; he may possess all the goods of the earth, but if he lacks the art of personality he is poor indeed. It is by this art that man shows that nobleness which belongs to the kingdom of God.

The art of personality is not a qualification. It is the purpose for which man was created, and it leads man to that purpose in the fulfilment of which is his entire satisfaction. By this art man does not only satisfy himself, but he pleases God. This phantom play on the earth is produced for the pleasure of that King of the universe whom the Hîndus have called Indra, before whom Gandharvas sang and Upsaras danced. The interpretation of this story is that every soul is destined to dance at the court of Indra. The art of personality is, in reality, learning to dance perfectly at the court of Indra. But the one who says, 'But how can I dance? I do not know how to dance,' defeats his purpose. For no soul is created to stand aside and look on, every soul is created to dance in the court of Indra. The soul who refuses certainly shows its ignorance of the great purpose for which the whole play is produced on the stage of the earth.

## ii

Gratefulness in the character is like fragrance in the flower. A person, however learned and qualified in his life's work, in whom gratefulness is absent, is devoid of that beauty of character which makes personality fragrant. If we answer every little deed of kindness with appreciation, we develop in our nature the spirit of gratefulness; and by learning this we rise to that state where we begin to realize God's goodness towards us, and for this we can never be grateful enough to His divine compassion.

The great Sufi poet Sa'di teaches gratefulness as being the means of attracting that favour, forgiveness, and mercy of God upon ourselves in which is the salvation of our soul. There is much in life that we can be grateful for, in spite of all the difficulties and troubles of life. Sa'di says, 'The sun and moon and the rain and clouds, all are busy to prepare your food for you, and it is unfair indeed if you do not appreciate it in thanksgiving.'

God's goodness is something that one cannot learn to know at

once; it takes time to understand it. But little actions of kindness which we receive from those around us we can know, and we can be thankful if we want to be. In this way man develops gratefulness in his nature, and expresses it in his thought, speech, and action as an exquisite form of beauty. As long as one weighs and measures and says, 'What I have done for you' and 'What have you done for me', 'How kind I have been to you' and 'How good have you been to me', one wastes one's time disputing over something which is inexpressible in words; besides one closes by this that fountain of beauty which rises from the depth of one's heart. The first lesson that we can learn in the path of thankfulness is to forget absolutely what we do for another, and to remember only what the other person has done for us. Throughout the whole journey in the spiritual path the main thing to be accomplished is the forgetting of our false ego, so that in this way we may arrive some day at the realization of that Being whom we call God.

There is a story of a slave called Ayaz, who was brought before a king with nine others, and the king had to select one to be his personal attendant. The wise king gave into the hands of each of the ten a wineglass and commanded him to throw it down. Each one obeyed the command. Then the king asked each one of them, 'Why did you do such a thing?' The first nine answered, 'Because your Majesty gave me the order'; the plain truth cut and dried. And then came the tenth slave, Ayaz. He said, 'Pardon, sire, I am sorry,' for he realized that the king already knew it was his command; by replying, 'Because you told me,' nothing new was said to the king. This beauty of expression enchanted the king so much that he selected him to be his attendant.

It was not long before Ayaz won the trust and confidence of the king, who gave him the charge of his treasury, the treasury in which precious jewels were kept. This made many jealous, this sudden rise from a slave to a treasurer of the king, a position which many envied. No sooner did people know that Ayaz had become a favourite of the king than they began to tell numerous stories about him in order to bring him into disfavour with the king. One of the stories was that Ayaz went every day into the room where the jewels were locked in the safe, and that he was stealing



them every day, little by little. The king answered, 'No, I cannot believe such a thing; you have to show me.'

So they brought the king as Ayaz entered this room, and made him stand in a place where there was a hole, looking into the room. And the king saw what was going on there. Ayaz entered the room and opened the door of the safe. And what did he take out from it? His old, ragged clothes which he had worn as a slave. He kissed them and pressed them to his eyes, and put them on the table. There incense was burning, and this that he was doing was something sacred to him. He then put on these clothes and looked at himself in the mirror, and said, as one might be saying a prayer, 'Listen, O Ayaz, see what you used to be before. It is the king who has made you, who has given you the charge of this treasure. So regard this duty as your most sacred trust, and this honour as your privilege and as a token of the love and kindness of the king. Know that it is not your worthiness that has brought you to this position. Know that it is his greatness, his goodness, his generosity which has overlooked your faults, and which has bestowed that rank and position upon you by which you are now being honoured. Never forget, therefore, your first day, the day when you came to this town; for it is the remembering of that day which will keep you in your proper place.'

He then took off the clothes and put them in the same place of safety, and came out. As he stepped out, what did he see? He saw that the king before whom he bowed was waiting eagerly to embrace him; and the king said to him, 'What a lesson you have given me, Ayaz! It is this lesson which we all must learn, whatever be our position. Because before that King in whose presence we all are but slaves, nothing should make us forget that helplessness through which we were reared and raised, and brought to life, to understand and to live a life of joy. People told me that you had stolen jewels from our treasure-house, but on coming here I have found that you have stolen my heart.'

### iii

Every impulse has its influence upon the word and upon the action. Therefore naturally every impulse exerts its full power

through words and deeds unless it is checked. There are two types of persons: those who have learnt to check their word and action when they exert their full power, and express themselves abruptly; the other kind of persons are those who mechanically allow this natural impulse to show itself in their word and deed without giving any thought to it. The former, therefore, is gentle, and the latter is man. Gentleness is the principal thing in the art of personality; one can see how gentleness works as the principal thing in every art. In painting, in drawing, in line and colour it is gentleness which appeals most to the soul. The same we see in music. A musician may be qualified enough to play rapidly and may know all the technique, but what produces beauty is his gentle touch.

It is mainly gentleness which is the basis of all refinement. But where does it come from? It comes from consideration, and it is practised by self-control. There is a saying in Hindustani: 'The weaker the person, the more ready to be angry.' The reason is that he has no control over his nerves; it is often lack of control over oneself which is the cause of lack of gentleness.

No doubt one learns gentleness by consideration. One must learn to think before saying or doing. Besides one must not forget the idea of beauty. One must know that it is not enough simply to say or do, but that it is necessary to say or do everything beautifully. It is the development of the nations and races which is expressed in gentleness. Also it is the advancement of the soul's evolution which expresses itself in gentleness. Nations and races, as well as individuals, will show backwardness in their evolution if they show lack of gentleness.

At this time the world's condition is such that it seems that the art of personality has been much neglected. Man, intoxicated with the life of cupidity and the competitive spirit, is held by the commercialism of the day, is kept busy in the acquirement of the needs of his everyday life, and the beauty which is the need of the soul is lost to view. Man's interest in all aspects of life, science, art, philosophy, remains incomplete in the absence of the art of personality. How rightly the distinction has been made in the English language between man and gentleman!



## iv

There is a tendency hidden behind human impulse which may be called the persuasive tendency. It may manifest itself in a crude form, or it may be expressed in a fine form. In the former aspect it is a fault, and in the latter aspect it is a mistake. When crudely expressed, someone urges another to agree with him, or to listen to him, or to do as he wishes by fighting, by quarrelling, by being disagreeable. Often such a person, by the strength of his will-power or by virtue of his better position in life, gets his wishes fulfilled. This encourages him to continue in the same way until he gets a disappointing result by his method, if he ever does.

The other way of persuading is a gentle way, by putting pressure upon someone's kindness, goodness, and politeness, exhausting thereby his patience and testing his sympathy to the utmost. By this people achieve for the moment what they wish to achieve, but in the end it results in the annoyance of all those who are tried by this persuasive tendency. Does it not show that to get something done is not so hard as to be considerate of the feelings of others? It is so rare that one finds a person in the world who is considerate of another person's feelings even at the sacrifice of his own desires. Everyone seeks freedom, but for himself. If he sought the same for another he would be a real freemason.

The persuasive tendency no doubt shows great will-power, and it preys upon the weakness of others who yield and give in to it owing to love, sympathy, goodness, kindness, politeness. But there is a limit to everything. There comes a time when the thread breaks. A thread is a thread; it is not a steel wire. And even a wire breaks if it is pulled too hard. The delicacy of the human heart is not comprehended by everyone. Human feeling is too fine for common perception. A soul who develops his personality, what is he like? He is not like the root or the stem of the plant, nor like the branches or leaves, he is like the flower, the flower with its fragrance, colour, and delicacy.

## v

The whole of manifestation is the expression of that spirit of the Logos which in Sufi terms is called *Kibria*. Through every being this spirit is manifested in the form of vanity, pride, or conceit. Vanity expressed crudely is called pride. Had it not been for this spirit working in every being as the central theme of life, no good or bad would have existed in the world, nor would there have been great or small. All virtues and every evil are the offspring of this spirit. The art of personality is to cut off the rough edges of this spirit of vanity, which hurts and disturbs those one meets in life. The person who says 'I,' the more he does so, the more he disturbs the minds of his listeners.

Many times people are trained in politeness and are taught a polished language and manner; yet if this spirit of vanity is pronounced, it will creep up in spite of all good manners and beautiful language, and express itself in a person's thought, speech, or action, calling aloud, 'I am, I am!' If a person be speechless, his vanity will leap out in the expression of his glance. It is something which is the hardest thing to suppress and to control. For adepts the struggle in life is not so great with the passions and emotions, which sooner or later by more or less effort can be controlled; but vanity, it is always growing. If one cuts down its stem then one cannot live, for it is the very self, it is the I, the ego, the soul, or God within; it cannot be denied its existence. But struggling with it beautifies it more and more, and makes more and more tolerable that which in its crude form is intolerable.

Vanity may be likened to a magic plant. If one sees it in the garden growing as a thorny plant, and one cuts it down, it will grow in another place in the same garden as a fruit-tree; and when one cuts it down again, in another place in the same garden it will spring up as a bush of fragrant roses. It exists just the same, but in a more beautiful form which gives happiness to those who touch it. The art of personality, therefore, does not teach the rooting out of the seed of vanity, which cannot be rooted out as long as man lives; but its crude outer garb may be destroyed in



order that, after dying several deaths, it may be manifested as the plant of desires.

## vi

Dignity, which in other words may be called self-respect, is not something which can be left out when considering the art of personality. When one asks what it is, and how this principle can be practised, the answer is that all manner of light-heartedness and all tendency to frivolity must be rooted out from the nature in order to hold that dignity which is precious to one. The one who does not care for it, does not need to take trouble about it; it is only for the one who sees something in self-respect. A person with self-respect will be respected by others, even regardless of his power, possessions, position, or rank; in every position or situation in life that person will command respect.

There arises a question: has light-heartedness then any place in life, or is it not necessary in life at all? All is necessary, but everything has its time. Dignity does not consist in making a long face, neither is respect evoked by a stern expression; by frowning or by stiffening the body one does not show honour; dignity does not mean being sad or depressed. It is apportioning one's activities to their proper time. There are times for laughter; there are times for seriousness. The laughter of the person who is laughing all the time loses its power; the person who is always light-hearted does not carry that weight in society which he should. Besides light-heartedness often makes a man offend others without meaning to do so.

The one who has no respect for himself, has no respect for others. He may think for the moment that he is regardless of conventionalities and free in his expression and feeling, but he does not know that it makes him as light as a scrap of paper moving hither and thither in space, blown by the wind. Life is a sea, and the further one travels on the sea the heavier the ship one needs. So for a wise man, a certain amount of weight is required in order to live, which gives balance to his personality. Wisdom gives that weight; its absence is the mark of foolishness. The pitcher full of water is heavy; it is the absence of water in the pitcher which makes it light, like a man without wisdom who is light-hearted.

The more one studies and understands the art of personality, the more one finds that it is the ennobling of the character which is going forward towards the purpose of creation. All the different virtues, refined manners, and beautiful qualities, are the outcome of nobleness of character. But what is nobleness of character? It is the wide outlook.

## vii

A noble-minded person shows, as something natural in his character, a respect for his word, which is called his word of honour. For that person his word is himself; and this reality can increase to such an extent that even his life could be sacrificed for his word. Someone who has reached this stage is not far from God, for many times in the Scriptures it is said, 'If you want to see Us, see Us in our words.' If God can be seen in His words, the true soul can be seen in his word. Pleasure, displeasure, sweetness, bitterness, honesty, dishonesty, all these are to be discerned in the words man speaks; for the word is the expression of the thought, and thought is the expression of the feeling. And what is man? Man is his thought and feeling. So what is the word? The word is man's expression, the expression of his soul.

The man on whose word you can rely, that man is dependable. No wealth of this world can be compared with one's word of honour. A man who says what he means proves his spirituality by this virtue. To a real person to go back on his words is worse than death, for it is going backwards instead of going forward. Every soul is going onwards towards his goal; and the person who is really going onwards shows it in his word. At the present time it is necessary to have so many courts and so many lawyers, and hence so many prisons which are increasing more every day, that this all shows the lack of that virtue which has been valued by the noble-minded ever since the beginning of civilization; for in this quality man shows his human virtue, a quality which neither belongs to the animals nor is attributed to the angels. What is religion? Religion in the true sense of the word is beyond explanation. It is a thin thread, too delicate to be touched, for it is too sacred to be touched. It is the ideal, which can be polluted



if it is touched; and it can be found in that sensitiveness which in other words may be called spirituality, the regard for the word.

Many in this world have undergone sacrifices; sufferings and pains have been inflicted on them, but it was only to put their virtue of the word to the test, for every virtue has to prove itself by going through a testing fire. When it has proved itself in its trial it becomes a solid virtue. This can be practised in every little thing one does in one's daily life. A person who says one moment one thing and another moment another thing, even his own heart begins to disbelieve him.

Among the great ones who have come to the earth from time to time, and have shown a great many virtues, this virtue has been the most pronounced. Mohammad, before coming before the world as a prophet, was called Amin by his comrades, which means trustworthy. The story of Haris Chandra is known to the Hindus down the ages, the example he has set is engraved upon the mind of the whole race. The story of Hatim, a Sufi of ancient times, has been a great inspiration to the people of Persia. In whatever part of the world and in whatever period, by the thoughtful and those with ideals the word of honour will be valued most.

### viii

There is a sense of economizing to be found more or less in every soul; and when this tendency works with those around one and those with whom one comes in contact, one develops one's personality. The desire to spare another, to have patience instead of trying his patience to the uttermost, is the tendency to economy, a higher understanding of economy. To try to spare another from using his energy in the way of thought, speech, and action, all saves his energy for the other and for oneself it is adding beauty to one's personality. A person ignorant of this in time becomes a drag upon others. He may be innocent, but he can be a nuisance; for he neither has consideration for his own energy nor thought for others.

This consideration comes to one from the moment one begins to realize the value of life. As man begins to consider this subject

he spares himself unnecessary thought, speech, or action, and uses his own thought, speech, and action economically; and by valuing one's own life and action one learns to value the same in others. The time of human life on earth is most precious, and the more one practises economical use of this precious time and energy the more one knows how to make the best of life.

Apart from one's own speech, even hearing another speak is a continual tension; it robs a person of his time and energy. The one who cannot understand, or at least does not try to understand something spoken in one word, and wants to put into a sentence what can be said in one word, certainly has no sense of economy; for economizing with one's money is much less important than the economy of one's life and energy and that of others. For the sake of beauty, grace, and respect, when dealing with others one must go so far and no further.

One cannot drive with the same whip a friend, an acquaintance, and a stranger. There again the question of economy must be considered. Without the sense of economy, one might try the goodness, kindness, generosity, and endurance of others to such a degree that in the end of the trial it would work out to the disadvantage of both. The person who is sensible enough to guard his own interest in life may be called clever, but the one who guards the interests of others even more than his own is wise; for in this way he does things without knowing to his own advantage also. It is the same sense of economy which one uses with little things in one's daily life at home and in business; the same sense used in a higher form, by thoughtfulness and consideration, makes one more capable of serving others, which is the religion of religions.

### ix

After having acquired refinement of character, and merits and virtues that are needed in life, the personality can be finished by the wakening of the sense of justice. The art of personality makes a statue, a fine specimen of art, but when the sense of justice is awakened that statue comes to life; for in the sense of justice lies the secret of the soul's unfolding. Everyone knows the name of



justice; but it is rare to find someone who really is just by nature, in whose heart the sense of justice has been awakened.

What generally happens is that people claim to be just, though they may be far from being so. The development of the sense of justice lies in unselfishness; one cannot be just and selfish at the same time. The selfish person can be just, but only for himself. He has his own law most suited to himself, and he can change it, and his reason will help him to do so, in order to suit his own requirements in life. A spark of justice is to be found in every heart, in every person, whatever be his stage of evolution in life; but the one who loves fairness, so to speak blows on that spark, thus raising it to a flame, in the light of which life becomes more clear to him.

There is so much talk about justice, so much discussion about it and so much dispute over it; one finds two persons arguing upon a certain point and differing from one another, both thinking that they are just, yet neither of them will admit that the other is as just as he himself.

For those who really learn to be just, their first lesson is what Christ has taught: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' One may say, 'If one does not judge, how can one learn justice?' But it is the one who judges himself who can learn justice, not the one who is occupied in judging others. In this life of limitations if one only explores oneself, one will find within oneself so many faults and weaknesses, and when dealing with others so much unfairness on one's own part, that for the soul who really wants to learn justice, his own life will prove to be a sufficient means with which to practise justice.

Again, there comes a stage in one's life, a stage of life's culmination, a stage of the soul's fuller development, when justice and fairness rise to such a height that one arrives at the point of being devoid of blame; one has nothing to say against anyone, and if there be anything it is only against oneself; and it is from this point that one begins to see the divine justice hidden behind this manifestation. It comes in one's life as a reward bestowed from above, a reward which is like a trust given by God, to see all things appearing as just and unjust in the bright, shining light of perfect justice.

## X

The art of personality is like the art of music: it needs ear-training and voice culture. To a person who knows life's music the art of personality comes naturally; and it is not only inartistic but also unmusical when a soul shows lack of this art in the personality. When a man looks at every soul as a note of music and learns to recognize what note it is, flat or sharp, high or low, and to what pitch it belongs, then he becomes the knower of souls, and he knows how to deal with everybody. In his own actions, in his speech, he shows the art; he harmonizes with the rhythm of the atmosphere, with the tone of the person he meets, with the theme of the moment. To become refined is to become musical; it is the musical soul who is artistic in his personality. Spoken in different tones, the same word changes its meaning. A word spoken at the proper moment and withheld at the moment when it should not be expressed, completes the music of life.

It is the continual inclination to produce beauty which helps one to develop art in the personality. It is amusing how readily man is inclined to learn outer refinement, and how slow many souls are to develop that art inwardly. It must be remembered that the outer manner is meaningless if it is not prompted by the inner impulse towards beauty. How God takes pleasure in man can be learned from the story of Indra, the king of Paradise, at whose court Gandharvas sing and Upsaras dance. When interpreted in plain words this means that God is the essence of beauty; it is His love of beauty which has caused Him to express His own beauty in manifestation, for it is His desire fulfilled in the objective world.

It is amusing sometimes to watch how good manners annoy someone who is proud of his bad manners. He will call it shallow, because his pride is hurt at the sight of something which he has not got. The one whose hand does not reach to the fruit says, when he fails, that the grapes are sour. And for some it is too fine to become refined, just as many will not like good music but are quite satisfied with popular music. And many even become tired



of a good manner, for it seems foreign to their nature. As it is not a merit to become unmusical; so it is not wise to turn against refinement. One must only try and develop beauty, trusting that the beauty in the depth of one's soul, and its expression, in whatever form, is the sign of the soul's unfoldment.

xi

A friendly attitude, expressed in sympathetic thought, speech, and deed, is the principal thing in the art of personality. There is limitless scope to show this attitude, and however much the personality is developed in this direction, it is never too much. Spontaneity and the tendency to give, giving that which is dear to one's heart, is what shows the friendly attitude. Life in the world has its numberless obligations, towards friend and foe, towards acquaintance and stranger. One can never do too much to be conscientious in one's obligations in life and to do everything in one's power to fulfil them. To do more than one's due is perhaps beyond the power of every man, but in doing what one ought to do one does accomplish one's life purpose.

Life is an intoxication, and the effect of this intoxication is negligence. The Hindu words *Dharma* and *Adharma*, religiousness and irreligiousness, signify that one's duty in life is *Dharma*, and the neglect of the same is *Adharma*. The one who is not conscientious in his obligations in life towards every being he comes in contact with, is indeed irreligious. Many will say, 'We tried to do our best, but we didn't know how', or, 'We don't know what is expected of us', or, 'How are we to find out what is really our due and what is not?' No one in this world can teach what is anyone's due and what is not. It is for every soul to know for himself by being conscientious in his obligations. And the more conscientious he is, the more obligations he will find to fulfil, and there will be no end to them.

Nevertheless, in this continual strife what might seem a loss to him in the beginning, in the end is gain; for he will come face to face with his Lord, who is wide awake. The eyes of the man who neglects his duty to his fellow-men, absorbed in life's intoxication, will certainly become dazzled and his mind

exhausted before the presence of God. It does not mean that any soul will be deprived of the divine vision, it only means that the soul who has not learned to open his eyes wide enough will have his eyes closed before the vision of God. All virtues come from a wide outlook on life, all understanding comes from the keen observation of life. Nobility of soul, therefore, is signified in the broad attitude that man takes in life.



# MORAL CULTURE





## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. The Law of Reciprocity	233
II. The Law of Beneficence	243
III. The Law of Renunciation	254





## CHAPTER I

# THE LAW OF RECIPROCITY

### i

## RECIPROCITY

IN dealing with another we ought first to consider in what relation we stand to him, and then to consider what manner of dealing would please us on the part of another who is related to us in the same way as we are to him. In all favourable actions we ought to do more than we should expect another to do for us; and in unfavourable actions we ought to do less than what we should expect on the part of another.

Duty must first be borne in mind, to consider in what relation we stand with regard to our relatives, neighbours, fellow-citizens, the people of our nation and of our race, and with the people in the world at large. For instance, favour shown to a neighbour and disregard to a relative in the home, sympathy shown to a foreigner while we feel bitter towards our own nation, these dealings, however unselfish and broadminded they may appear, are undesirable. It is just like trying to make a sketch of a human face before even having learned how to draw a straight or a parallel line.

Charity begins at home. We should first begin to practise our sympathy with those who are related to us, for we are in duty bound to look after them and their interests. But instead of widening our sympathies, we keep within our own small circle; thus we may perhaps never progress in life or advance to the higher standard of humanity. This is one of the drawbacks to modern civilization, which confines itself to the thought of nationalism and advances no further. Yet even this is better than the broadmindedness which makes one favour the outsider, and neglect and even disfavour those related to us.

The best way would be gradually to widen our sympathies, with a consideration of our duty and relationship to others,

gradually expanding them from those who are nearest to us to those who are most remote. A sense of generosity and willingness should go hand in hand with duty; if not, instead of a blessing it becomes a curse.

## ii

### OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR FRIENDS

In friendship we must realize that a friend inferior in position or poorer in life than we are should not for one moment be regarded as such. When he is a friend, in whatever condition he may be or whatever position he may occupy, he must be considered our equal; and the same spirit of equality should be borne in mind in dealing with a friend, however high his position may be. Convention should not be more than is necessary for his evolution. The sense of difference must be avoided in every aspect of dealing with a friend. There must be no secrets between true friends.

The use of friendship for a selfish motive is like mixing bitter poison with sweet rose-syrup; and it is necessary to be ready, without the least hesitation, to serve a friend attentively, in every capacity of life, not expecting for one moment any thanks or return from him.

A friend, in the true sense of the word, is nearer and closer than our own family, relations, neighbours, nation, and race. The secret of the friend should be kept as one's own secret; the fault of the friend one should hide as one's own fault; the honour of the friend must be considered as one's own honour; an enemy of the friend should be regarded as our enemy; a friend of the friend must be considered as our friend. One must not boast of friendship, but must practise it, for the claimants are so often false. In the despair of the friend, consolation must be given; in the poverty of the friend, support is necessary; in the shortcomings of the friend, overlooking is necessary; in the trouble of the friend, help should be given; with the joy of the friend, rejoicing is right.

To be today friendly and tomorrow unfriendly cannot for one moment be called friendship; the value of friendship is in its

constancy. Forbearance, patience, and tolerance are the only conditions which keep two individual hearts united. There is a saying in Hindustani, by Seman, on friendship, 'Stand by your friend in his time of need, like the reed on the bank of the river'. When a man is sinking in the water and catches hold of a reed, it will save him if it is strong; and if not, it will sink along with him.

### iii

#### OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR ENEMIES

Our dealings with our enemy should be considered with more delicacy than our dealings with a friend. This fact is generally overlooked by man, and he deals in any way with an enemy, while he is considerate to a friend. Sometimes one insults one's enemy, spoiling thereby one's own habit, and making the enemy still more insulting. Sometimes by constantly dwelling on the faults of the enemy one impresses one's own soul with the same faults, and focuses them upon the soul of the enemy; if he lacks these faults, they may by reflection develop in him and cause him to become a still more bitter enemy.

It is as unwise to underestimate the enemy's bitterness and power to do harm as it is to overestimate them. Very often a man, blinded by his ego, fails to estimate the power of the enemy and he says, 'Oh, what can he do? What do I fear?' giving way to an impulse when driven to it by the enemy. This is a defeat; keeping steadfast and calm under such circumstances is a victory. Complaining about the harm caused by the enemy is a weakness; avoiding it by taking precautions, facing it with strength and checking it with power are the things worth doing. It is wise to take advantage of the criticism made by an enemy, for it can help to correct us; and it is foolish when one laughs it off, considering oneself to be too good to be like that.

In the case of revenge, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is right when one is sure that kindness and forgiveness will have no power whatever upon the hard heart of the enemy, but on the contrary will make him worse. But so long as there is a chance of meeting the enemy's revenge by kindness the above law must



not be practised. It is better to suppress the enemy before he can rise against us; and it is right to throw him down when he has risen against us.

It is wise to be watchful of the movements of the enemy, and to safeguard oneself against them; and it is foolish to allow oneself to be watched, and to let the enemy safeguard himself against us. It is right to decrease the power of the enemy in every way possible, and to increase one's own power and make it much greater than the enemy's. It is right to know the secret of the enemy; and it is more than right to keep our secret from him.

Precautions must be taken that nobody should become our enemy; and special care must be taken to keep a friend from turning into an enemy. It is right by every means to forgive the enemy and to forget his enmity if he earnestly wishes it; and to take the first step in establishing friendship, instead of withdrawing from it and still holding in the mind the poison of the past, which is as bad as retaining an old disease in the system.

## iv

## DISTINCTION OF GRADES

We find two tendencies working through different individuals: recognition of grades, and non-recognition of the same. The first may be seen when a person says, 'He is my chief; he is my professor; she is my mother; he is my father's maternal uncle; therefore I have to consider him or her'. And the other tendency we see when someone says, 'What do I care if he is the head in my office? I do not care if he is older in age; I do not care if she is my aunt; what do I care if he is my mother's grandfather?' We see gentleness in one and spirit in the other, and prefer them according to our nature. If we are spirited we like the spirit of independence; and if we are gentle we prefer gentleness.

A Sufi does not believe in one-sided tendencies. He says spirit is needed and gentleness is needed; both are required on suitable occasions. The question arises of how we are to act: when we should show spirit and when we should consider gentleness.

Spirit should be shown when we are forced by circumstances, by a situation, to be in subordination; there spirit is needed to

free oneself and be independent. But the use of spirit is not a simple matter. The flame of a match cannot stand up to the air; to stand up to the air you must have a torch. Therefore it is the foolish spirited ones who rebel against their life's conditions and fall because their spirit lacks strength and power. For them patience and gradual perseverance, with courage and thoughtfulness, are necessary. But when we are morally won by someone's love and kindness, such as the care of a mother, the protection of a father, the advice of an aged friend, the sympathy of a neighbour, by the one who shows us the right path through life, by the one who may have guided humanity to light, it can never be subordination, but only generosity on our part to consider their greatness, to revere them, to respect and to obey them. However, all this may not be dealt with by the same words nor all treated in the same manner. The Qur'an says, 'We have created among jinns and men individuals of all grades'. In this way we must distinguish to what extent gentleness may be shown to deserving souls.

## V

## OUR DEALINGS WITH GOD

God to the Sufi is not only a heavenly King or an ideal of worship, but a friend, a beloved, nearer and dearer than all others in the world; and our dealings with Him must be as the dealings of an earnest lover with his beloved. When it is the time of worship, we must worship Him as the soldier saluting his king, as his duty; but at the time of communion we must commune with Him as a lover would with his beloved.

All things we do that are pure, ideal, and satisfactory to others, we must attribute to God; and for all things we do which are not our ideal, nor satisfactory to others, we must blame ourselves. Because all that comes from perfection is ideal and satisfactory, therefore its praise belongs to Him who alone is praiseworthy; that which is not ideal but unsatisfactory comes from imperfection, which our imperfect self represents. Every action of kindness we do to another, we must do for God; and then there will be no disappointment. For if we do it for a person whom we love



or trust, but who after a time may prove unworthy of our love and undeserving of our trust, we become disappointed and are discouraged in doing kindness to another or in placing trust in another.

We must give our every day's account to God, our divine Ideal; lay before Him our shortcomings, humbly repentant, without missing a day, and ask for help from Him who is almighty, to give us strength and courage to do better tomorrow.

We should never pride ourselves on good deeds, for His goodness is greater than the greatest good we could ever do. It produces in us false vanity, the only veil which hides God from our sight. We must begin to feel His presence in this manner; and surely after some time He will become a living entity before our sight, and all will seem dead save He alone, the living Being. When this stage is reached, then begins divine communion.

## vi

### HOW TO TAKE THE DEALINGS OF OTHERS WITH US

By the constant study of life the Sufi realizes that mankind, which claims to be the most just in all creation, is found in the end to be the most unjust. Man is generally just when he judges another, but he is unjust when the thing concerns himself, though he is not conscious of it. He calls it justice too. Therefore the lesson that the Sufi learns in the law of reciprocity is to consider it a natural thing when injustice is shown by others; but he tries in every dealing with others to be as just as he can. He tolerates the injustice of others as much as his state of evolution permits; but when he sees that more than this is intolerable, he resists it with explanations, with persuasion, even with threatening. But the tolerance with which he overlooks the injustice of others is for others only; when it comes to his dealings with others, he does not tolerate even the slightest injustice on his own part. The sense of justice is not the same in everybody; it is according to a person's evolution and his ideal.

Gracious conduct in others must be graciously received; harsh conduct in others we should take smilingly, pitying them in our mind that they are not evolved enough to be gentle in their



dealings. When doing a kindness to others the first thing that must be considered is that it should be unselfish, and not for the sake of appreciation or a reward. He who does good and waits for a reward is a labourer of good; but he who does good and disregards it is the master of good. He has engraved good upon the universal consciousness, and its echo will be no other than good.

## vii

## HOW TO TAKE THE DEALINGS OF OUR FRIENDS WITH US

It is always confusing to the thoughtful person to decide upon the right way of action when in contact with people of different temperaments and at different stages of evolution; and to the right-thinking man it is puzzling when in friendship he has to put up with ill dealings on the part of friends. The first essential one must understand in friendship is to be slow in making friendship, and slower still in breaking it. Children become friends a thousand times in a day; and a thousand times they fight over little things and become unfriendly. If grown-up people do the same, it shows at once to the seer the grade of their evolution.

The consideration of the dealings of others with us must not be weighed against our dealings with them; for the self is always dearer to everyone, and when weighing our dealings with others we naturally give them more weight, and do not give the dealings of others with us the same weight. Therefore, in order to make a balance, we must always consider that a kind action, a good thought, a little help, some respect shown to us by another, are more than if we did the same to our friend; but an insult, a harm done to us, a disappointment caused to us by a friend, a broken promise, deceit, or anything we do not like on the part of a friend, should be taken as less blameworthy than if we did the same. Every good and kind action of a friend we ought to appreciate very much; and the same done by us to a friend we should think is not enough. We should blame a friend less for his dealings that are blameworthy; but for doing the same ourselves we ought to blame ourselves more.

This makes the balance; and this is true reciprocity. A person who goes on making friends every day and breaking friendship

every other day, remains friendless all through life; but the one who is charitable to a friend and strict with himself in his dealings will prove to be the true and good friend worth having in life.

## viii

## HOW TO TAKE THE DEALINGS OF OUR ENEMIES

When dealing with our enemies one must bear in mind that there is a possibility of exaggerated imagination; for the least little wrong done by an enemy seems to be a mountain of wrong, while the least little right done by a friend seems to be a mountain of right. It is timid to estimate the enemy above what he is; and it is stupid to estimate him at less than his real power.

According to the law of reciprocity, to allow the enemy to insult or harm is a fault; paying back insult for insult and harm for harm is the only thing that balances. In dealing with the enemy one must first compare him with one's own self in intelligence and power; and consider whether it is possible to stand against him and his enmity or not. In the case where this is possible, with strength and courage and intelligence we should bend him down before he does so to us, for in enmity the first blow is to the advantage of the giver. Where we find ourselves weaker or less than the enemy, the best thing would be not to show enmity until we have developed the power of withstanding him; to wait with patience and trust until that time comes and until then to keep peace and harmony. This is not deceit in the sense of reciprocity.

It is against wisdom to allow anybody to become our enemy if we can possibly help it. We should always refrain from this, and be cautious in all affairs of life lest we cause anybody to become our enemy; for the enemies we have in life are enough. But weakness should never be shown to the enemy; always show him your strong side. Never give him a chance to prepare a blow and we should see that he gets it from us before he prepares.

But equally there must not be a moment's delay on our part in the effort to harmonize and to be friendly should the enemy desire it; nor must we lose one moment in becoming friends with him if it is in our power. A man must always be ready to become



a friend to the enemy, and try his best to do it, unless by doing so he adds to the vanity of the enemy.

It is most undesirable to be the first to start an enmity. The one who does so is the more blameworthy, and from his side the effort of harmonizing should come.

Sometimes by thinking bitterly of someone we produce enmity in his heart that may not have been there before; it only sprang from our imagination. The same rule applies to friendship. If we think strongly with love of someone, even of an enemy, our power of mind will turn the enemy into a friend.

### ix

#### HOW TO TAKE THE DEALINGS OF OTHERS ACCORDING TO OUR OWN GRADE

The dealings of others differ in their nature according to our relation with them. For instance, when a close companion has said something to tease us, we should take it as a jest; whereas the same words spoken by our servant, or by a person who is not so intimate as to joke with us, we should take as an insult. This shows that it is not the dealing that makes the effect, but the relationship with another that changes the effect. Dictating on the part of parents, teachers, elderly people, or a superior in office, business, wealth, position, or sense, is not so hard as when it comes from a younger person, inferior in position, or devoid of sense.

It is always wise to associate with one's equals in thought, position, and power, trying always to progress and enter a still higher circle, not merely through ambition, but because we are fitted for it. In every capacity of life self-respect must be preserved; and by thought, speech, and action we must guard ourselves against humiliation.

If another person treats us badly without reason or justice, we must fight against it, and prove by doing so that the dealing was unjust. But if we ourselves are at fault, we should blame ourselves before resenting bad treatment on the part of the other. If someone deals with us much better than we deserve, we should not become oblivious of the fact that we do not deserve his good treatment; we should count it as a kindness on his part. If we find that we



have deserved the good treatment given us by another we should not take it as something on which to pride ourselves or something to be vain about; but we should take it as a strengthening of the hope to become still better, so that the goodness of God may manifest itself through us.

x

### GOD'S DEALINGS WITH US

It is generally the case that a man attributes his pleasant experiences in life to his own worthiness, and unpleasant experiences he considers to be the wrath of God. The right way to consider this matter is that every pleasant experience should be counted as His great mercy for one's very small goodness, which cannot be compared with God's mercy, and as an encouragement to increase the goodness in oneself; and every unpleasant experience should be considered as God's small wrath for our great evil, to teach us the lesson to refrain from it; and one should see His mercy in both; in the former evident, in the latter hidden.

A wise man is he who keeps an even balance between faith and fear: such faith in God's mercy that he says, 'If the whole virtuous world were drowned, I with my faith in His mercy should be saved, like Noah in his ark'; and such fear that he says, 'If the whole wicked world were saved, I might be taken to task by the wrath of God'. Those who do not understand this moral are apt to go astray by seeing the wicked enjoying themselves, and by looking at the suffering of the virtuous.

The world and its life is an illusion to the untrained eye. It deludes, puzzles, and creates confusion in man's sight; and the first step in the right direction is to watch the pleasure and displeasure of God by closely watching life; and constantly to endeavour to walk in the path of His pleasure, and to refrain from taking the path of those who act to His displeasure.

:

## CHAPTER II

### THE LAW OF BENEFICENCE

#### OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR FRIENDS

FRIENDSHIP as the average person understands it is perhaps little more than acquaintance; but in reality it is more sacred than any other connection in the world. To a sincere person, entering into friendship is like entering the gates of heaven; and a visit to his friend is a pilgrimage to a true loving friend.

When, in friendship, a thought arises, 'I will love you as you love me', or, 'I will do to you as you do to me', this takes away all the virtue of the friendship, because it is a commercial attitude, prevalent everywhere in the commercial world: everything is done for a return, and measure is given for measure. Friendship should be the contrary pole to the practical side of life; for when a person is tired by the selfish surroundings of the world he feels inclined to take refuge in the love and kindness of a sympathetic friend. But if there is a question of selfishness in friendship, where can a soul go who is tired and annoyed with the selfish surroundings of the world?

Friendship is just like recreation after the toil of the day. One can speak or be with someone who is different from all others in life. But difficulty arises because everyone thinks that his friend ought to prove worthy of his ideal, and this in the end disappoints him. For the law of beneficence teaches this: that goodness is worth while which can withstand even badness; that kindness is valuable which can withstand tyranny. Every soul is not ready to follow this ideal, and it depends to what extent one is strong enough to withstand. By having an ideal and keeping it before him, a person develops sooner or later into that ideal.

A friendship used to carry out one's aims and objects in life through the love and kindness of a friend is only business. The unselfish friend is the pure one, and it is such a friendship that will last; but a selfish friendship will vanish. For the selfish friend will



create selfishness in the heart of his friend, and the unselfish friend will create unselfishness in the heart of his friend.

Everyone gets, sooner or later, what he gives, for the heart knows the condition of the heart. Therefore there is no better principle than wishing good to the friend, speaking good of the friend, doing good to the friend, with all kindness and love; having no thought for one moment of the friend's deserving our goodness, kindness, or love.

## ii

### OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR RELATIONS

Our love, kindness, service, and sympathy are due to people in the world, and especially to those around us, according to their expectation. A stranger naturally expects less than an acquaintance; an acquaintance expects less than a friend; and a friend, less than relations. Therefore these have more right to ask for our love and service, and it is our first duty to give it to them. It does not matter if they do not give us the same, or if they do not prove worthy of our ideal. It is a mistake for wise people to expect the same from them or to expect everyone to prove worthy of their ideal, when it is so difficult even for ourselves to prove worthy of our own ideal.

However highly we may think of ourselves, in the end at the examination we fail. Therefore the wise thing would be to do all the good we can to those who expect it from us, and especially to those who consider it their right to expect it from us, without even thinking whether they will return it or whether they deserve it.

There are some who stand by their relations with pride. Taking the part of the relation and standing by the relation with pride is right, for this is the first step towards human brotherhood. A person cannot jump at once to universalism. There are some who have a sort of natural hatred of their relations, and they love those who have no connection with them. But they are mistaken, for a person who cannot love his own brother will never be able to consider another person as a brother, because he has neglected learning his lesson at home. Far from hating his relations, a wise



man will not even hate his enemy. By hating relations for their unworthiness you make them more unworthy; whereas by loving them, some day you will be able to draw out the worthiness that you seek in them.

Harmony at home spreads out, and makes the world harmonious for us; and inharmony at home spreads out throughout the world, and builds an inharmonious world for us. For instance, a person who has quarrelled at home and gone to China, and settled there to have peace, has taken the disharmony with him to China, and can never be at peace all his life.

However badly situated we may be in life, if we try our best to master the situation, it is far better and greater than wishing to change the situation, for this is nothing but a weakness. Among relations it is so wonderful when there is harmony between brothers and sisters, a link of love and harmony between husband and wife, and especially love and devotion between parents and children. Verily, there is no greater light than love.

### iii

#### OUR DEALINGS WITH SERVANTS

We are so situated in life that whatever position we may occupy we are never independent, we are never self-sufficient. Therefore every individual depends upon others for help, and others depend upon him for help; only the position of the person who is one among many who receive help becomes lower in the eyes of those who count themselves among the few who can help.

This makes every person a master as well as a servant. Yet everyone, in the intoxication of his mastership, forgets his place as a servant, and looks upon the one who helps him as his servant. The wise, whose feelings are awakened, think on this question deeply, and do their best to avoid every possibility of giving even an idea to a servant of his servanthip, far less insulting him in any way or hurting his feelings. We are all equal, and if we have helpers to serve us in life we ought to feel humble and most thankful for the privilege, instead of making the position of the servant humble.

It is wise to avoid putting one's own burden on another, however exalted we may be in our position in life. It is right to share the work with the servant, however humble it may seem; for there is nothing in life too humble to do. If a man can do a certain thing, he need not leave it to a poor man to do because he is higher in position. It is necessary to take help; but it is right to do everything that comes in life, regardless of one's riches, power, or position.

The moral of the ancients was that a servant was considered as a child of the family, and he was never allowed to feel that he was lower in any way than the members of the family. One cannot commit a greater sin than hurting the feelings of the one who serves us and depends upon our help. Once the Prophet heard his grandson call a servant by his name. On hearing this he at once said to his grandson, 'No, child, that is not the right way of addressing elders. You ought to call him "uncle". It does not matter if he serves us, we are all servants of one another, and we are equal in the sight of God.'

There is a verse of Mahmud-e Ghaznavi: 'The Emperor Mahmud, who had thousands of slaves to wait on his call, became the slave of his slaves when love gushed forth from his heart.' Nobody appears inferior to us when our heart is kindled with kindness and our eyes are open to the vision of God.

## iv

## OUR DEALINGS WITH MASTERS

It is natural for every person to have a master, from a beggar to a king. There is no soul on earth who has not someone under whose control and command he is expected to act: in school under the teacher, in the army under the commanding officer, in the workshop under the foreman, in a nation under the king or president. There is no aspect of life that exempts man from this. Thus it is wise to act towards one's own superior with the consideration one would expect from one's inferior.

Faithfulness, respect, good manners, sincerity, and attention should always be shown in our dealings with our superiors in life; and he who lacks them will find that they are also lacking in



those from whom he expects them. A child who is insolent to his parents will always see insolence in his own children; a person who has been abrupt to his chief will always meet with abruptness in his servants. It is the law of nature. Therefore a respectful manner and goodwill to one's master in any aspect of life are always worth while.

## v

## OUR DEALINGS WITH ACQUAINTANCES

A man should always try to develop his acquaintanceship into friendship, at least where it is possible; but where it is impossible he should try at least to continue acquaintance, instead of going from acquaintance to estrangement. A man always wonders how he can make friends with everybody, for friendship is such a rare thing; and so he waits with his high ideal perhaps all his life, and does not meet his ideal friend. And as he passes by all those with whom he becomes acquainted, in a way he avoids the chance of friendship with them, thinking they are not worth it. It is easy for anyone to say about another that he is not worth making friends with; but he does not know how much he is worth himself.

Therefore the wise are thankful when they see anybody with a more or less friendly inclination towards them, and make the best of the opportunity by gaining three benefits from it: the first, that by being friends with someone a person develops in himself the spirit of friendliness; the second, that one adds one more to the circle of one's friends; and the third, the joy of exchanging love and kindly feelings, which is greater and better than anything in the world. There is nothing but benefit in widening one's circle of friends, and there is nothing but loss when one loses a friend from one's circle.

One ought to look upon acquaintanceship as the sowing of the seed of friendship, not as a situation forced upon one; for those who turn their backs on a man and look at him with contempt also do that to God. To think, 'That person is perhaps of no value; that person is of no importance', is unpractical, besides being unkind. As all things have their use, both flowers and thorns, both sweet and bitter, so all men are of some use; what position,



what class, what race, what caste they belong to makes no difference.

Friendship with good and bad, with wise and foolish, with high and low, is equally beneficial, whether to yourself or to the other. What does it matter if another be benefited by your friendship, since you would like to be benefited by someone else's friendship? He is wise who treats an acquaintance as a friend, and he is foolish who treats a friend as an acquaintance, and he is impossible who treats friends and acquaintances as strangers; you cannot help him.

## vi

### OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS

The word 'neighbour' is used traditionally for those who are around us at home, or at the office, or in the workshop. Tulsidas, the Hindu poet, says that the essence of religion is kindness. Those who are inclined to do kindness in life must not discriminate among the people around them, between those to whom they must be kind and those to whom they need not be kind. However kind and good a person may be to those he likes, to those he wishes to be kind to, he cannot for this be called kind by nature; real kindness is that which gushes out from the heart to the worthy and to the unworthy.

There are some people who are kind by nature and yet do not know how to express it; and, therefore with all their kindness they prove in life to be unkind. There are different ways of expressing kindness, such as by being harmless, by being undisturbing, and by being considerate to those around us. These three are the first principles of kindness.

By harmlessness is meant that though man does not seem to harm man in the way the animals of the forest harm one another, yet by keen study one sees that man can harm man more than the wild animals harm one another. For man is the outcome of the development of the whole of creation; therefore the ego, which makes one selfish, is developed in him more than in any other creature. Selfishness keeps man blind through life, and he scarcely knows when he has caused harm to another.

By not disturbing is meant that even a little crudeness of thought, speech, or action can disturb another, and this man easily does in life without considering. And the sense of man has the delicacy of God. Crudeness on our part may disturb another very much although we do not even notice it.

By consideration is meant that man's life in the world is a life of poverty, poverty in some way or other even if he lives in a palace. In the Qur'an it is said, 'God alone is rich, and everyone on earth is poor'. Man is poor with his myriad needs, his life's demands, the wants of his nature; and when one keenly observes life, it seems that the whole world is poverty-stricken, everyone struggling for the self. In this struggle of life, if a man can be considerate enough to keep his eyes open to all around him and see in what way he can be of help to them, he becomes rich; he inherits the kingdom of God.

## vii

## OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR FELLOW-MEN

To be just and fair to our fellow-men is not only a virtue but a benefit to ourselves, even from the practical point of view. Sometimes a man thinks, 'I have got the better of another, and thereby I have profited; so, at the loss of virtue, I have been benefited'. But the secret is that our benefit in life depends upon the benefit of others. We are dependent upon each other. The inner scheme of working is such that it gives to all a share of the mutual loss and benefit, though outwardly it does not seem to do this. Man is deluded and kept from realizing this fact, because he sees that one is in pain while another has pleasure, and he sees that one appears to be benefited by another's loss. It is true that this is so on the outer plane, but it is not so in the inner workings. The robber, after having robbed, is as restless during the night as the one who is robbed.

Christ's teaching that man should be kind and charitable, and that of all other teachers who showed humanity the right path, seems to differ from what one sees from the practical point of view which is called common sense; yet according to uncommon sense, in other words super-sense, it is perfectly practical. If you



wish to be charitable, think of the comfort of another; if you wish to be happy, think of the happiness of your fellow-men; if you wish to be treated well, treat others well; if you wish that people should be just and fair to you, first be so yourself to set an example.

## viii

## OUR DEALINGS WITH WRONGDOERS

A man is always ready to accuse another of having done something which he himself would not mind doing. There is another man who would perhaps not commit the same fault of which he accuses another, but he has committed it in the past. There is a third person who accuses another of doing something wrong, which, owing to circumstances, he himself is incapable of doing.

This is pictured by Hafiz in his poetry; he says, 'O pious one, I would listen to you if you were young, and if it were spring, and there were a garden and a fair one offering you a bowl of wine, and you refused it at that time'. It is easy to blame another for his wrongdoings, just as it is easy to examine and difficult to be examined. The words of the Bible, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her', refer to this.

Often a man attaches great importance to an action done by another which is only wrong by the standard of his own understanding; whereas the right and wrong of every person is according to his stage of evolution and according to his understanding. Often a man accuses another of having committed some fault without considering what has prompted him to commit that fault, what is the real condition of his life, whether he did it willingly or unwillingly, whether he was compelled to do it by his own self, or by someone else, or by some unforeseen circumstance. When a man accuses another person without even having seen his wrongdoing, but because he has been told of it by someone else, it is a still greater mistake; it is not even a fact known at first hand.

When we see with the brain we see so many faults in others; but when we see through feeling, we can only try to reason out how we can justify their having done as they did, or at least tolerate their having done so, through weakness or by mistake,



which is natural to every man since Adam, the father of humanity, was liable to faults.

The more feeling develops in the heart of man, the more forgiving he becomes. For to him the world's inhabitants appear as little children, just as small as they appear to him who flies in an aeroplane; and as one is ready to forget the faults of children, so the wise are ready to forgive the faults of men.

### ix

#### OUR DEALINGS WITH ENEMIES

The difference between the law of reciprocity and the law of beneficence is that in the former a person is justified in giving measure for measure, and in the latter one is supposed to tolerate and to forgive and to show kindness, so that the enemy may grow to be a friend. There are cases where one cannot show kindness; but yet one can be tolerant. There are cases where one cannot forgive; and yet revenge, for a humane person, is an unnatural thing. One can overlook the faults of another; and by that one will give less occasion for disagreement and still less occasion for enmity.

Then a person thinks, 'By being kind to our enemy we encourage him in his tyranny'. But so long as we have kindness in our heart, instead of hardening the nature of the enemy it will soften it, since we receive all that we give out. A kind word in return for a harsh word, a kind action in return for a cruel one, a kind thought in return for an evil thought, make a much greater impression than measure for measure.

The iron which cannot be broken by hammers can be melted by fire. Love is fire; kindness is its chief expression; and if a person has developed this sufficiently in his heart, he can sooner or later change an enemy into a friend. It is mostly unkindness on one's own part that causes enmity all around; and one blames enemies and becomes horrified at their number, then blames the world and its nature and its life; and when the creation has been proved blameworthy in a person's mind, then how can the Creator be kept free from blame? Then that man feels that he alone is blameless, and all else is blameworthy; and life becomes a torture to him;

he thinks it is not worth living. He becomes self-righteous, and everybody seems to be against him.

It is always wise to avoid every possibility of causing enmity, and to make every effort to turn any enemy, even a person in the least degree offended, even a person who has slightly misunderstood you, or perhaps has felt vexed with you, into a friend again; nor for the sake of your own happiness or even of his, but for the sake of the good principle, for material benefit. For however slight an enemy he may be, he can cause you very great pain or suffering, and however little friendship you have with a person, he may become most useful some day. And apart from all material benefits, to feel, 'That person is pleased with me, he is well-disposed towards me, he is no longer my enemy', is in itself such a great benefit.

x

### OUR DEALINGS WITH GOD

God is the ideal that raises mankind to the utmost reach of perfection. As man considers and judges his dealings with man in his conscience, so the real worshipper of God considers his dealings with God. If he has helped anybody, if he has been kind to anybody, if he has made sacrifices for anybody, he does not look for appreciation or return for his doing so to the people to whom he has done good; for he considers that he has done it for God, and therefore his account is with God, not with those with whom he has dealt. He does not care even if instead of praising they blame him; for in any case he has done it for God, who is the best judge and the knower of all things.

There is no ideal that can raise the moral standard higher than the God-ideal, although love is the root of all and God is the fruit of this. Love's expansion and love's culmination and love's progress all depend upon the God-ideal. How much a man fears his friend, his neighbour, when he does something that might offend him whom he loves, whom he respects; and yet how narrow is his goodness when it is only for one person or for certain people! Imagine if he had the same consideration for God, then he would be considerate everywhere and in dealing with all

people; as in a verse of a Sufi which says, 'Everywhere I go I find Thy sacred dwelling-place; and whichever side I look I see Thy beautiful face, my Beloved'.

Love for God is the expansion of the heart, and all actions that come from the lover of God are virtues; they cannot be otherwise. There is a different outlook on life when the love of God has filled a man's heart. The lover of God will not hate anyone; for he knows that by doing so he will hate the Creator by hating His creation. He cannot be insincere, he cannot be unfaithful; for he will think that to be faithful and sincere to mankind is to be faithful and sincere to God. You can always trust the lover of God, however unpractical or however lacking in cleverness he may appear to be, for simply to hold strongly in mind the thought of God purifies the soul of all bitterness, and gives man a virtue that he could obtain nowhere else and by no other means.



## CHAPTER III

# THE LAW OF RENUNCIATION

### i

#### LIFE IN GOD

'IN HIM we live, and move, and have our being.' This teaching of the Bible describes the nature of God: that God is the ocean, the waves of which are all its activities, small or great. The Qur'an says in support of this that not a single atom moves, groups, or scatters without the command of God. Rumi explains it still more plainly: 'Air, earth, water and fire are God's servants; to us they seem lifeless, but to God living.' In those who are conscious of this knowledge, and to the extent of their realization of this truth, there arises the spirit of renunciation which may be called the spirit of God.

He who wants anything becomes smaller than the thing he wants; he who gives away anything is greater than the thing he gives. Therefore to a mystic each act of renunciation becomes a step towards perfection.

Forced renunciation, whether forced by morality, religion, law, convention, or formality, is not necessarily renunciation. The real spirit of renunciation is willingness; and willing renunciation comes when one has risen above the thing one renounces. The value of each thing in life, wealth, power, position, possession, is according to the evolution of man. There is a time in his life when toys are his treasures, and there is a time when he puts them aside; there is a time in his life when copper coins are everything to him, and there is another time when he can give away gold coins; there is a time in his life when he values a cottage, and there is a time when he gives up a palace.

Things have no value; their value is as man makes it; and at every step in his evolution he changes their value. Certainly there is no gain in leaving home, friends, and all affairs of life, and going to the forest and living the life of an ascetic; and yet who has the

right to blame those who do so? How can the worldly man judge and understand the point of view of the one who renounces? Perhaps that which seems of the greatest value to the worldly man is nothing to the one who has renounced.

The Sufi makes no restrictions and has no principles of renunciation, nor does he teach renunciation. He believes that to sacrifice anything in life which one does not wish to sacrifice is of no use, but that renunciation is a natural thing, and grows in one with one's evolution. A child which cries for its toy at one stage of its childhood, comes to an age when it is quite willing to give away the toy it once cried for.

There are three stages of morals. The first stage is the moral of reciprocity. This moral is natural to the one who sees the difference between himself and another, who recognizes every man as such and such.

The second stage is the law of beneficence, where man, recognizing himself as an entity separate from others and recognizing others as distinct entities themselves, yet sees a cord of connection running through himself and all, and finds himself as a dome in which rises an echo of good and evil; and in order to have a good echo he gives good for good and good for evil.

But the third stage is the moral of renunciation, where the difference of 'mine' and 'thine' and the distinction of 'I' and 'you' fade away in the realization of the one Life that is within and without, beneath and beyond; and that is the meaning of the verse in the Bible, 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being'.

## ii

### RENUNCIATION

Those in the East who have renounced pleasure, comfort, riches, possessions, from a mystical point of view, have not renounced because they were too weak to hold them or because they did not desire them, but because they wished to renounce them before they passed from their hands. All things one possesses in life one has attracted to oneself; and when one loses them, it shows that the power of attraction is lost; and that, if one can renounce them before that power of attraction is lost, one rises above them.



All things that are in a person's hold are not really his own, although for the moment he may think so; when he loses them he realizes that they were not his own. Therefore the only possible way of everlasting happiness is to realize that what one possesses is not one's own, and to renounce in time, before all that one possesses renounces one. The law of renunciation is great; and it is the only way of happiness there is.

## iii

## RENUNCIATION (CONTINUED)

When one looks deeply into life one sees that there is no gain which is not a loss, and that there is no loss which is not a gain. Whatever man has gained, he has also lost something with it, which he often does not realize; and sometimes when he knows it he calls it the cost if he considers it a lesser loss. But when he does not know, the loss is great; for every gain is after all a mortal gain, and the time that is spent in its acquisition is a loss, and a greater loss in comparison with the gain.

The loss of every mortal thing is a gain in the immortal spheres; for it wakens the heart which is asleep both in the pursuit and the pleasures of the gain. When man closely watches his own life and his affairs he finds that there has been no loss that is to be regretted; that under the mantle of every loss a greater gain was concealed; and he also notices that with every gain there has been a loss, and when this gain is compared with the loss it has proved to be a greater loss.

In the eyes of the world people who renounce their pleasures, comforts, and happiness seem to be foolish; but there is nothing that man has renounced without receiving a greater gain. And yet renunciation for gain can be called nothing but greed; renunciation for the pleasure of renunciation is the only renunciation that is worth while.

## iv

## GREED AND GENEROSITY

When a person has in view an object he wants to attain, he is smaller than the object; but when a person has attained the object,



he is greater than the object. And as he holds the object which he has attained, so he diminishes his strength, and the value of the object becomes augmented; but when he renounces the object he has once attained, he rises above the object, he takes a new step in life and a higher step.

As with every step taken in climbing a mountain one goes higher and higher, so in life one progresses in attainment of any kind, be it spiritual or material. For instance when a person has a desire to have a hundred pounds he is smaller than the hundred pounds; when he has earned them he is greater than the sum he has earned. But when he holds them the value of a hundred pounds increases more and more in his eyes, and may increase to that of a million pounds; and he himself becomes smaller and smaller in his estimation as if he would never be able to earn those hundred pounds again. But when a man has earned a hundred pounds and has spent them, he has risen above them; his next ideal will be a thousand pounds.

So it is in any aspect of life. The moral must be remembered that what we value we must attain, but once attained, instead of being crushed under it, we must freely rise above it and take a further step in life. Those who have made progress in life have made it with this view; and those who come to a standstill in life are the ones who hold fast to that which they have attained, never being inclined to renounce it; and in that way they have met with failure. Therefore greed, however profitable it may seem, in the end is weakening, and generosity, though at times it may seem unprofitable, in reality is strengthening.

## v

## THE NECESSITY OF RENUNCIATION IN LIFE

The saying, 'There is no gain without pain', when rightly interpreted would mean that everything costs something and has its price; and it is this law of nature that teaches one that for every kind of attainment in life, from the highest to the lowest, renunciation is necessary. It may be in the form of patience, in the form of service, in the form of modesty, it may be in the form of sacrifice; in whatever form it happens to be, it has to be for some purpose.

When attaining something in life one always risks or meets with some loss. It does not appear loss in the presence of an immediate gain; but in things that take time to gain and conditions that want patience for their attainment, an immediate and seeming loss means a bitter renunciation.

Therefore it is justifiable if a person shows a tendency to find a reason before renunciation of any kind. But his difficulty is that he will not be able to attain things that are abstract and things beyond ordinary comprehension, for he will not risk renouncing anything for such gains. And those who renounce without reason lose also; for they renounce and yet may not gain anything. That is why the success of renunciation lies in the renunciation itself; to be pleased with renunciation, not to renounce for gain. That renunciation alone is the renunciation which may be called virtue.

There are four desires that man may pursue: pleasures, wealth, duty, and God; and every one of these attainments costs something, and nobody should deem it possible to attain any one of these without renunciation. Therefore, though renunciation is the last lesson, one must begin to learn it from the beginning.

## vi

## THE RELATIVITY OF GAIN

Life consists of a continual struggle for gain, of whatever kind it may be. Gain seems to be the purpose of life and it is accomplished by mastery, and this proves that one naturally must try to gain whatever seems to be good and attainable in life or whatever one needs in life; when one is able to attain it, it shows mastery, and when one is unable, it shows the lack of it. But by a still deeper insight into the subject one sees that every gain a person has in view limits him to a certain extent to that gain, directs his activities into a certain channel, and forms the line of his fate. At the same time it deprives him of a still greater or a better gain and of the freedom of activity which might perhaps accomplish something still better.

It is for this reason that renunciation is practised by the Sufis;



for with every willing renunciation a person proceeds a step towards a higher goal. No renunciation is ever fruitless. The one who is looking for a gain is smaller than his gain; the one who has renounced a thing has risen above it. Every step towards progress and ascent is a step of renunciation. The poverty of the one who has renounced is real riches compared with the riches of the one who holds them fast. One could be rich in wealth and poverty-stricken in reality; and one can be penniless and yet richer than the rich of the world.

## vii

## RENUNCIATION AND LOSS

There are two different renunciations: one is renunciation, the other is loss. True renunciation is that which a person makes who has risen above something that he once valued; or whose hunger and thirst for the thing are satisfied and it is no more so valuable as it once was; or who perhaps has evolved and sees life differently, no longer as he saw it before.

Renunciation in all these cases is a step forward towards perfection. But the other renunciation is one which a person is compelled to make when circumstances prevent his achieving what he wishes to achieve or from getting back what he has lost helplessly; or when, by weakness of mind or body, by lack of position, power, or wealth, he cannot reach the object he desires. That renunciation is a loss; and instead of leading towards perfection it drags man down toward imperfection.

The wise therefore renounce willingly what they feel like renouncing; but they are constantly in pursuit of what they feel like gaining. One or two failures will not discourage them; after a hundred failures they will rise up again with the same hope, and will gain the thing desired in the end.

But there is another weakness, and that is holding what has been gained, and indulging in what has been attained. That limits man to his gain, deprives him of a greater gain, and even prevents him in the course of time from holding the gain he already has.

This philosophy was lived in their lives by the ascetics who



travelled from place to place. The happiness, comfort, and good friends they made in one place, they enjoyed for a short time and then left it lest it might bind them for ever. This does not mean that this kind of life should necessarily be an example for a wise person; but our journey through life's experience is also a continuous journey, and the good and bad, the right and wrong, the rise and fall of yesterday one must leave behind, and turn one's back on them, and go forward with new hope, new courage and enthusiasm, trusting to the almighty power of the Creator in one's spirit.

## viii

## THE LEARNING OF RENUNCIATION

People think that renunciation is learned by unselfishness. It is the onlooker who sees renunciation in the form of unselfishness, as a dog might see renunciation when a man throws away a bone: it does not realize that the bone is only valuable to it and not to the man. Every object has its peculiar value to every individual; and as a person evolves through life so the value of things becomes different; and as one rises above things so one renounces them in life. And when the one who has not risen above them looks at someone else's renunciation, he calls it either foolish or unselfish.

One need not learn renunciation; life itself teaches it, and to the small extent that one has to learn a lesson in the path of renunciation, it is this: that where in order to gain silver coins one has to lose the copper ones, one must learn to lose them. That is the only unselfishness that one must learn: that one cannot have both, the copper and the silver.

There is a saying in Hindi, 'The seeker after honour dies for a name, the seeker after money will die for a coin'. To the man to whom the coin is precious the name is nothing; to him who considers a name precious money is nothing. So one person cannot understand the attitude of another unless he puts on his cloak, and sees life from his point of view. There is nothing valuable except what we value in life; and a man is fully justified in renouncing all that he has, or that may be offered to him, for the sake of that which he values, even if it be that he values it



only for this moment; for there will never be a thing which he will value always in the same way.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
Before we too into the Dust descend;  
Dust into Dust, and under dust to lie  
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!  
*Omar Khayyám.*

## ix

## THE NATURE OF RENUNCIATION

From a practical point of view life is like a journey started from the unmanifested state of being and going to the manifested state; and from manifestation returning again to the unmanifested or perfect state of being. As man, life has the fullest privilege of knowing about the journey, and of directing to a certain extent the affairs on the journey; of making this journey comfortable, and arriving at the destination at the desired time. The mystic tries to make use of this privilege, and all spiritual wisdom teaches the manner in which this journey should be made.

As man comes from the unmanifested, it is evident that he comes alone, no one with him and with nothing. After coming here he begins to own objects, possessions, properties, even living beings. And the very fact that he came alone, without anything, necessitates his being alone again in the end to enter his destination. But once man has owned things of the earth he does not wish to part with them, and wishes to carry the weight of all he possesses on this journey; these things weigh him down, and naturally make his journey uncomfortable. As nothing and no one really belongs to him, it must all fall away in time and he is made lonely against his desire. It is only willing renunciation which can save man from this burden on the path.

It is not necessary that this renunciation should be practised by indifference to one's friends. No, one can love one's friends and serve them, and yet be detached. It is this lesson which Christ taught when he said, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' He



has renounced who gets the things of the world, but gives them to the world; but the one who does not know renunciation gets the things of the world, and holds them for himself. Love is a blessing, but it turns into a curse in attachment; admiration is a blessing, but it turns into a curse when one tries to hold the beauty for oneself.

The way of those who renounce is to know all things, to admire all things, to get all things, but to give all things; and to think that nothing belongs to them and that they own nothing. And it is this spirit which will liberate man from the earthly bondages which keep the generality of mankind in captivity throughout the whole of life.

## X

## THE FINAL VICTORY

The final victory in the battle of life for every soul is when he has abandoned, which means when he has risen above, what once he valued most. For the value of everything exists for man only so long as he does not understand it. When he has fully understood, the value is lost, be it the lowest thing or the highest thing. It is like looking at the scenery on the stage and taking it for a palace. Such is the case with all things of the world: they seem important or precious when we need them or when we do not understand them; as soon as the veil which keeps man from understanding is lifted, then they are nothing.

Do not, therefore, be surprised at the renunciation of sages. Perhaps every person in the spiritual path must go through renunciation. It is not really throwing things away or disconnecting ourselves from friends; it is not taking things to heart as seriously as one naturally does by lack of understanding. No praise, no blame is valuable; no pain or pleasure is of any importance. Rise and fall are natural consequences, so are love and hatred; what does it matter if it be this or that? It matters so long as we do not understand. Renunciation is a bowl of poison no doubt, and only the brave will drink it; but in the end it alone proves to be nectar, and this bravery brings one the final victory.





# THE SUFI MESSAGE OF HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

---

VOLUME 3

EDUCATION

RASA SHASTRA

CHARACTER-BUILDING AND THE ART OF  
PERSONALITY

MORAL CULTURE

---



Published for  
International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, Geneva  
by Barrie and Rockliff  
London